THE

TRIUMPH

OF

PRUDENCE over PASSION:

VOL. I.

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MAY

THE TRIUMPH OF PRUDENCE over PASSION: OR, THE HISTORY OF MISS MORTIMER AND MISS FITZGERALD.

By the AUTHORESS of EMELINE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

DUBLIN:

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M,DCC,XXXI.

THE HISTORY OF Miſs MORTIMER, AND Miſs FITZGERALD.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

LETTER I.

Nov. 4. 1779.

ACCORDING to my promiſe, made this morning at our parting, I ſhall dedicate all my leiſure moments to my dear Eliza, and amuſe her with the little occurrences, or obſervations of the day, juſt as they preſent themſelves to my pen;

I ſay, juſt as they preſent themſelves, by way of giving you warning, that you are not to expect much order or method in my Letters: but I fancy our former correſpondence may have given you ſome idea that my ſtyle is not renowned for either. However, if you are diverted, that is the chief point with me, for I have my fears that great part of your time will paſs but heavily, as I am very apprehenſive your mother's health will ſuffer by going from a very warm houſe in town, to a very cold one (ſurrounded by ponds and lakes) in the country, at this dreary ſeaſon, you know what bad effect it had on her laſt winter, though the weather was uncommonly mild; and I really think it was very unneceſſary for her to run any hazard, as the chief purpoſe of her going could have been accompliſhed as well, had ſhe ſtaid in town; it is, I allow, a very laudable cuſtom to be kind to the tenants, to entertain them, and make them happy at the approaching ſeaſon; but I think, as ſhe is ſo delicate, Mr. Skeffington might as well have done the honours of Chriſtmas to your tenants as his own, ſince it muſt be done in his houſe, your's being ſett. I hope, however, my fears may prove without foundation, both

for

BRITISH MUSEUM 15 70 MAY

for her ſake and yours; for then I know you will be happy any where with her, and another perſon that ſhall be nameleſs. ——You contrived mighty ill to leave town to-day, for by ſo doing you loſt a moſt glorious ſight; a large body of our Volunteers aſſembled, to honour the memory of King William, who made a very fine appearance, and fired ſeveral vollies, even better than the Regulars, who performed the ſame ceremony an hour or two after. Every one looked delighted, except ſome few, who want to be thought friends to Government, but for me who am an enthuſiaſt in the cauſe of Liberty and my country, I was wonderfully delighted to ſee our men of the firſt rank and property, as well as our moſt eminent citizens, voluntarily arming in defence of both: I think it warms one's heart, and I really pity your lukewarm ſouls, who can ſee ſuch a ſight without emotion.—

November 5th. I had wrote thus far yeſterday, and ſhould perhaps have expatiated for ſome time on the love of our country, but that I was agreeably interrupted by the arrival of an unexpected viſitor; a thundering rap at the door, threw all

the family into conſternation, as it was a very unuſual hour for company: I, who ſat by the window, ſtood up, and looking through the glaſs, ſaw a poſt-chaiſe and four horſes up to their bellies in mud, the poſtilions and ſervants all in black: the door was ſoon opened, and out ſtepped the prettieſt young widow I ever ſaw; I believe you will eaſily recollect this deſcription ſuits but one of our acquaintance; it was no other than our dear Emily: I flew to welcome her, and in a minute a thouſand queſtions were aſked by each, without either waiting for an anſwer: however, when we were ſeated, and began to be more coherent, I told her ſhe ſhould be my gueſt, as I had ſpare beds for her and her maid, and the men might go with their horſes, for I had not room for them; and if I had, ſhe knew, I could not abide to run foul of a ſervant fellow every ſtep I took about my houſe: ſhe ſmiled at the expreſſion, but ſaid, ſhe had as little liking to them as I, when they could be diſpenſed with, and that ſhe would gladly accept my invitation, that ſhe might have as much of my company as poſſible while ſhe ſtaid. Gertrude, who, you know, is the mother of this family, no ſooner heard this affair regulated, than

ſhe

ſhe quitted the room to give the neceſſary orders; for that is a trouble ſhe takes entirely on herſelf, and indeed ſhe makes a much better figure in the office than I ſhould do, ſo I am mighty willing to indulge her in it. Emily and I being left quite to ourſelves till tea-time, you may imagine we had no lack of chat; I found the buſineſs that hurried her to town was to adminiſter to her huſband's will; it ſeems her tender care of him, during an illneſs of ſix months, touched his conſcience, and by way of amends for the very unkind treatment he had given her, all the while ſhe was his wife, he made a will, to which he appointed her Executrix, and left her the intereſt of a large ſum of ready money during her life, in addition to her jointure, and ſome part of the principal at her diſpoſal: ſhe is alſo to be guardian to the child, and have the care of the eſtate; I know no one more capable of managing it for the child's advantage: the man certainly meant well at laſt, but I think the greateſt favour he could confer on her was his dying; for her own fortune is ſo large, that ſhe only wanted to be allowed to enjoy it in comfort, and what he has left her, will, I am ſure, be no great addition to her happineſs, for

I know few that value riches leſs than ſhe, nor none that make a better uſe of them. Lovely as ſhe was when laſt you ſaw her, you can ſcarce have an idea of what ſhe is now! She is of the middle ſize, elegantly formed, and has a feminine ſweetneſs in her air and manner, that is eaſier imagined than deſcribed; her weeds become her amazingly; and there is a langour in her countenance, contracted during the two unhappy years ſhe was a wife, ſo peculiarly ſuited to her habit, that it intereſts one, you cannot think how much, in her favour. I cannot with any degree of patience reflect on her being ſacrificed to a man, with whom it was impoſſible ſhe could be happy, merely becauſe his eſtate and her father's were contiguous: it is aſtoniſhing to think, that ſuch ridiculous motives can actuate rational creatures, in the moſt material circumſtances of life: I cannot ſay I ſhould have been quite ſo obedient as Emily was; for a child has a natural right to a negative voice, when it concerns the happineſs of her life. I do not mean by that to juſtify all the pretty maſters and miſſes who in direct oppoſition to the will of their parents, as well as to every dictate of reaſon and diſcretion, are daily per-

performing the tragedy of, All for Love; and indeed, it uſually turns out a very deep tragedy to them; for whatever they may think before marriage, they ſoon after diſcover, that a competency, according to their rank in life, is abſolutely neceſſary to matrimonial felicity: but I think in chuſing a huſband for a girl, her friends ſhould be careful to fix on one, whoſe qualities of mind and temper, are ſuch as would be capable of inſpiring her with that tender eſteem, which, according to my notions, is much more likely to be laſting than fierce flaming love; for that being more a paſſion than a ſentiment, is, like all other violent paſſions, very apt to ſubſide, and leave no traces but what are unpleaſing.

I took the opportunity of Emily's being out on buſineſs, to finiſh my letter for the poſt, as I think you will be uneaſy if I defer it longer. I hear her carriage ſtop, ſo ſhall conclude, for as her ſtay will be but ſhort in town, I would not wiſh to leave her when ſhe is at home; ſhe is come up and bid me ſay a thouſand kind things for her, to dear Eliza: Gertrude expreſſes herſelf much in the ſame manner.

ner. But I hope you have more conſcience than to expect I ſhould impart all they ſay: I ſhall therefore leave you to ſuppoſe them; and ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your's,

in ſincereſt friendſhip,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

Mr. Fitzgerald and Charles know how much I eſteem them; ſo I need not trouble you to tell them.

LETTER

LETTER II.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Caſtle-Skeffington, Nov. 7.—

YOU cannot imagine, Louiſa, how much I was diſappointed this morning, when the ſervant returned from the poſt-houſe without a letter from you! I ſuppoſe I looked vexed, for Charles, who juſt then come into the room, aſked what occaſioned my chagrin, and when he heard, obſerved, you had promiſed to write; but thoſe who relied on women's promiſes, would generally find themſelves diſappointed; and added ſome unfavourable reflections on female friendſhip; this affronted me, and I told him, if men were but half ſo ſincere in their friendſhips, there would be a good deal leſs deceit and fraud in the world than there is at preſent: he ſaw I was warm, and taking my hand, ſaid, my dear Eliza, you ſeem angry, ſure you cannot ſuppoſe I was ſerious, for you know I have the higheſt reſpect for Miſs Mortimer, and if I had not, I would not willingly ſay any thing to offend you; I really did but joke, and thought you would take it as

ſuch:

ſuch: I accepted his apology, and we became friends again.

But are not you ſurpriſed at my warmth on ſuch a trivial matter, and what might well be taken as a jeſt? I allow it muſt ſeem ſo to you; but I was diſpleaſed with, and had reaſon to think he was more ſerious, than, on recollection, he choſe to pretend. You muſt know, I have diſcovered in him a propenſity to jealouſy, which has alarmed me moſt exceedingly, as it may be productive of great unhappineſs to us both. But to tell my ſtory with ſome method, I muſt inform you, that at the laſt Inn we lay at, we were joined by a Mr. Hamilton, a young man of large fortune in the county of Derry, who being alone, Charles invited to ſup with us, and we eſteemed him no ſmall acquiſition to our company; for he has had a liberal education, is juſt returned from his travels, and makes ſuch obſervations on the laws, cuſtoms and manners of different nations, as do credit to his underſtanding, and promiſe fair for his being an ornament to his own country. You may think ſuch a companion made us all very chearful, and I, who delight in ſuch ſubjects, drew him on to give us a little deſcrip-

deſcription of the moſt material places he paſſed through, which he did in ſuch eaſy, elegant language, that when he retired to his chamber, he left us full of his praiſes, that is, my mother and I, for Charles had grown very grave, and very ſilent for ſome time before; when my mother obſerved it ſhe aſked the cauſe, and he attributed it to a head-ach, upon which we ſeparated for the night, in hopes reſt would relieve him. In the morning he ſeemed quite recovered; Mr. Hamilton joined us at breakfaſt; politely regretted that he was to take a different road, and gave Charles a preſſing invitation to his houſe, where he ſhould be in leſs than a month, as he was to ſtay about that time on a viſit to a relation in this country: Charles promiſed to go, on condition he would return with him. This point being ſettled, and breakfaſt over, he attended us to our carriage, where taking a very reſpectful leave of my mother, and a very gallant one of me; we all ſet out on our different journeys, and reached home in the evening without meeting any other adventure. I took notice that Charles was at times very thoughtful, and though I had a ſmall ſuſpicion of the cauſe, I ſtill hoped I was miſtaken, till I

was

was put out of doubt this morning, by Kitty, who, while ſhe attended me, ſaid, ſhe thought it her duty to inform me Mr. Skeffington had aſked her ſeveral queſtions concerning my opinion of Mr. Hamilton, whether I had talked of him, when ſhe was undreſſing me laſt night, and in ſhort was ſo inquiſitive, that the girl, who you know, has not much penetration, perceived he was jealous. I was very ſorry he had expoſed himſelf, and very much vexed that he had talked in ſuch a manner to my ſervant, which was in effect making her a ſpy over me; beſides that, if ſhe was ill diſpoſed it was putting it in her power to tell lies, and make miſchief, for ſake of a bribe he offered her, to tell him the truth; his behaviour hurt me greatly, and was the cauſe of my anger at what he had ſaid this morning, which otherwiſe I ſhould not have thought worth notice; however, his being ſo concerned at diſpleaſing me, and the particular attention he has paid me all day, ſhew how anxious he is to be agreeable to me, and makes it impoſſible for me to retain any diſpleaſure againſt him; I flatter myſelf my conduct will cure him of that unhappy propenſity; but I will be very ſure it has before I

think

think of being united to him. I have no doubt but to-morrow's poſt will bring a letter from you, and will leave this unfiniſhed till then, though it is already of a reaſonable length; but, for my own part, I think letters of friendſhip can never be too long, nor thoſe of buſineſs too ſhort.

Nov. 8th. As I expected, this poſt has brought a letter from you, in which you fully account for the delay, the arrival of ſuch a welcome viſitor, is ſufficient apology; I am however well pleaſed ſhe gave you an opportunity of diſpatching your epiſtle next day; for I think my patience would not have held out another poſt, and I ſhould have joined Charles, in exclaiming againſt the fickleneſs of woman. It was very mal-a-propos of Emily, not to come into town 'till the day I left it; for I ſhould have great pleaſure in ſeeing her eaſy and happy; and though it is a ſhocking thing to ſay, yet ſhe certainly never could be either while Mr. Rochfort lived, as an unkind huſband muſt deſtroy any woman's peace: I am glad for his own ſake he had the juſtice to acknowlege her merit before his death; however, he was of ſuch an unhappy temper, that had he recovered, I doubt not, he would have relapſed into his former caprice and ill-

nature. I am no great friend to ſecond marriages; but I think Emily would be very excuſable ſhould ſhe make choice of one with whom ſhe's likely to be happy; for ſhe is now at an age very ſubject to tender impreſſions, and the time ſhe paſſed with her huſband, can only be reckoned a time of ſlavery: Whatever ſtate ſhe chuſes, I hope ſhe will enjoy all the happineſs in it ſhe ſo well deſerves: thank her and Gertrude for their kind remembrance of me; and tell them no one loves them better. I ſhall not be ſo unreaſonable as to expect you will be a very punctual correſpondent while your gueſt is with you, as ſhe is not to ſtay long; but I flatter myſelf, when you can ſteal half an hour, you won't forget your promiſe.——O! but I was quite unlucky in leaving town the day I did; for beſides miſſing Emily, I loſt ſeeing the Volunteers, which I am very ſorry for, as I think them a moſt reſpectable body, and you know I am as public-ſpirited as any Roman Matron, in the moſt virtuous ages of the commonwealth, I mean; for I would not chuſe to compare myſelf to a Roman, after they were governed by the Emperors, becauſe that Government was the cauſe of their being degenerated, and ſunk

in

in luxury and corruption; ſo you ſee I have no ſmall opinion of myſelf, at leaſt of my public virtue; and whatever others may think, I am ſatisfied, if women were taught diſintereſted love for their country, there would be more patriots amongſt the men than there are at preſent, for ſeveral obvious reaſons; particularly that, as there are few of them that don't wiſh to recommend themſelves to our favour, they would be very cautious how they acted in their public capacity, if they knew our contempt would be the conſequence of their apoſtacy. No doubt the ancients were of this opinion; for you may find, in the moſt glorious times of Greece and Rome, the women were juſt as warm in their country's cauſe, as the men: and hiſtory has applauded them for it; though now people affect to think thoſe things above our capacity, and indeed the preſent mode of education for our ſex is ſo very trifling, that I fear there is ſome truth in the ſuppoſition.

When I am writing to you, my pen, I think, runs on of itſelf, and I know not when to ſtop it; ſo pleaſing are the communications of unreſerved friendſhip! the hour for the poſt going out reminds me,

it is time to conclude. It is probable you will hear from me very ſoon again, as I don't intend ſtanding on ceremony with you, eſpecially while Mrs. Rochfort is in Dublin.

My mother and Charles are perfectly grateful for your eſteem; you know what a favourite you are with them both.

Farewel, dear Louiſa,

Ever your's,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER III.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Nov. 10.—

COUSIN James Fitzgerald came here yeſterday, to ſtay with us till he ſets off for Dublin, to attend Parliament, which will be to-morrow, and I could not think of letting him go without a line to my dear Louiſa, as I know the firſt viſit he makes in town will be to you: for I aſſure you, you ſtand very high in his opinion; and let me tell you, all the young ladies in the country ſet a great value on themſelves, if they can obtain his approbation; for, as you have often obſerved, he has a good head, and a good heart, and is eſteemed accordingly. There is few of our gentlemen that would not wiſh him for a ſon-in-law: but though he makes himſelf perfectly pleaſing in women's company, and likes being among them, no one ſeems, as yet, to have made any impreſſion on him. I bid him guard his heart againſt the fair widow, but he is no way apprehenſive, he ſays; however, I inſiſt

on it to him, that Mrs. Rochford will overcome all his ſenſibility at firſt ſight, though I am far from believing what I ſay, as I am certain when he attaches himſelf to any woman, it will be from conviction that ſhe poſſeſſes the beauties of the mind, even in preference to thoſe of the perſon, which are the only motives to thoſe who fall in love at firſt look; a foundation that promiſes no great permanency in the paſſion; for I look on it as a proof either of a very weak mind, or uncommon ſuſceptibility; or perhaps a mixture of both, and in any of the caſes, great fickleneſs is to be expected.

I wrote to you ſo lately, that I have now nothing material to impart, except that I hope Charles's good ſenſe has conquered his late tendency to jealouſy; for I have not ſeen the leaſt ſymptom of it ſince, though there has been ſeveral agreeable young men to viſit us, within theſe few days; this hope has given infinite ſatisfaction: for I confeſs his affection is neceſſary to my happineſs, yet I never could think of being his wife ſhould he continue in that unfortunate diſpoſition.

We

We are to have viſitors to-morrow; a Mr. Boyle and his daughters; they came to this neighbourhood juſt before I went laſt to town, I paid my compliments to them, but leaving the country two days after, I did not ſee them ſince, ſo I cannot ſay much about them: if they ſhould prove agreeable they will be an acquiſition, as they are but a ſhort walk from us. I believe I told you, Bell-Park was left to Mr. Boyle by his uncle, who was a delightful old man: I hope his relations may be as pleaſing. In my next, you ſhall have my opinion of them. My mother is pretty well as yet; I ſhall be very happy if ſhe does but continue ſo till we get to town again, for it alarms me much to have her ill here.

My dear Louiſa knows how much I love her.

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER IV.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Nov. 25. —

IT is impoſſible for me to ſteal a moment ſince I wrote laſt, to tell my Eliza how much I am concerned at the defect you have diſcovered in Mr. Skeffington's temper; it may cauſe you a deal of uneaſineſs, for it is ſeldom cured. I depend but little on your hopes of his having conquered it, for you are a partial judge, being ſo prejudiced in his favour; beſides people are apt to believe what they wiſh; but when you all come to town, I ſhall have a watchful eye over him, and will not let you deceive yourſelf in a point ſo material to your happineſs. I doubt that you will think yourſelf much obliged to me, though I am ſure you ought, for you muſt allow, a woman in love ſtands in need of a friend to ſee things in a proper light for her, as ſhe is utterly incapable of ſeeing with her own eyes, when the beloved object is any way concerned. I think if Charles does not mend his manners, you ſhall marry Mr. Hamilton;

that

that is, if I do not; for I fancy I ſhould like him for myſelf, by your deſcription of him, but we will conſider of theſe matters hereafter. At preſent I want to tell you, I received your laſt epiſtle by your very agreeable letter-carrier, who delivered it himſelf the day after he arrived in town. Emily was out when he came, but I aſked him for the evening, and then introduced him to her; he admires her as every one does, but as to any thing more, I do not take his heart to be very vulnerable. Do you know that a handſome widow, of eighteen, is too great an attraction for a ſober, ſedate ſpinſter to have in her houſe.

I am abſolutely fatigued with entertaining all the fine fellows that come here ſince ſhe has been my gueſt. They pay me the compliment of their viſits, but I am not ſo vain as to take them to myſelf, for I know if ſhe was not here, I ſhould not be honoured with their company above once in a month, and indeed I think it often enough in all conſcience to be troubled with them, for my ſpirits are quite wearied with the inceſſant peal of nonſenſe they think it neceſſary to ring in the ears

of

of every woman of this ſide forty: after that age, I fancy one would be pretty free from them. To be ſure ſome of them could not talk ſenſe, but I ſhould be glad thoſe that can, would be convinced that women are rational creatures as well as themſelves.

I really think the generality of young women have more ſolid ſenſe than the young men; at leaſt, it is ſo in the circle of my acquaintance. But this is ENTRE NOUS: for ſhould it be known I thought ſo, the whole Male Sex would be up in arms againſt me at once, becauſe good-ſenſe is one of the things they would willingly make us believe they have an excluſive patent for. But I, who hate monopolies, cannot help putting in a claim to ſhare of the commodity for ſelf and Co. to ſpeak in the trading ſtyle, which is mighty convenient when one is in haſte, though ſo laconic.

You are a good girl in laying aſide ceremony in our correſpondence; it would be quite barbarous to inſiſt on an anſwer to every letter, now my time is not my own; it is very well if I can give you a

ſhort

ſhort acknowlegement for two or three at a time.

Emily will, I fancy, ſtay longer than ſhe at firſt propoſed: ſome buſineſs has occured that cannot be ſoon concluded. True it is ſhocking enough to date a woman's happineſs from the death of her huſband; but if huſbands will be brutes, they muſt expect both their wife and her friends will wiſh them dead. Emily behaves with the utmoſt propriety; never ſpeaking a reproachful word of Mr. Rochford, for tho' one muſt think ſhe is pleaſed at her releaſe, it would not be decent in her to ſay ſo. I like your political ſentiments, they exactly coincide with my own: I ſee no reaſon why women ſhould not be patriots; for ſurely, if tyranny and oppreſſion are eſtabliſhed in a country, they are more liable to ſuffer from it, both in their perſons and properties than men, becauſe leſs able to defend themſelves: it, therefore, concerns them much, to uſe all their influence in oppoſing it; and doubtleſs that influence is more powerful than people are aware of; they ſhould, therefore, be taught to uſe it for the good of mankind, both as it relates to individuals, and the community at large. What

a pity

a pity you and I were not born in ancient Greece! we ſhould have made a noble figure in Hiſtory, as Spartan wives or mothers.

Yes, I was ſurpriſed at your warmth, before I knew the cauſe, and for that matter, I am ſurpriſed ſtill: for you are ſuch a ſoft, gentle, ſoul, ſo formed for the tender paſſion, that I did not think it was in nature for you to be diſpleaſed with your beloved two minutes together; eſpecially when his crime proceeded from his too great affection for you. I am glad, however, to find you are getting a little ſpirit; I often adviſed you to it, and you ſee what effect it had: your anger brought him out of his airs in an inſtant, whereas I will venture to ſay, your tenderneſs would not have done it in a month. Nothing like ſhewing one's authority now and then; it makes one appear of conſequence, and is abſolutely neceſſary to keep down the domineering temper of thoſe lords of the creation.

I am going with Emily and Gertrude, to ſpend the evening with a friend. Oh! I have a ſecret to tell you of Gertrude;

it

it is a love affair too, therefore juſt fit for your ear: how was it ſhe never made you her confidant. I cannot tell it now, as they wait for me.

Adieu, dear girl,

Your's,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER V.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Nov. 14. —

ACCORDING to promiſe, I go on writing to my dear Louiſa, without waiting for an anſwer: I do not, however, want to paſs it on you as a great obligation, for I think I could not exiſt any time without communicating to you all the little incidents that occur, and conſtitute part of my happineſs; but I will acknowlege, hearing from you, is a material addition to it.

I informed you in my laſt, Mr. Boyle and family were to be with us next day; they came much earlier than is uſual with ſtrangers, to ſhew us, as he ſaid, they wiſhed to be on a friendly footing, and hoped we would follow the example, which we did the very next day, for we were pleaſed with each other: we did not part till after ſupper, nor would they quit us, till we promiſed to return their viſit

ſo

ſo immediately. I wiſhed for you often, you would be infinitely charmed with Mr. Boyle, who is a true born Iriſh-man: generous, hoſpitable and humane; accompanied with a quality for which our country-men are not much renowned. That is, ſuch a prudent œconomy as prevents him from out-running his fortune, though every thing in his family is in the genteeleſt ſtyle of life, and he is continualy doing good-natured or charitable actions; but he does not throw away his money; nor do his daughters think it beneath them to attend to the management of houſhold affairs. He is mighty chearful, and has, I think, all the good diſpoſition of his uncle. His daughters are rather pretty, the youngeſt moſt ſo, and ſhe knows it; ſhe is about eighteen, her ſiſter two years older. Miſs Boyle pleaſes me beſt, for ſhe is ſenſible and agreeable, without any airs. Miſs Harriet has a good underſtanding, improved by reading, but ſhe has a degree of affectation that ſpoils her, when ſhe lays that aſide, which ſhe can do, ſhe is very pleaſing. I believe it is the effect of a fooliſh vanity on account of her perſonal charms; and I am ſurpriſed that one whoſe mind is ſo amply endowed, ſhould

fall into such a weakness; but probably a few years will cure her of that folly, and she will then be an amiable woman. I am very happy in having them for neighbours, as there is not a young person of my own sex in any of the families very near us, except one, and she is as unfit a companion for a rational being as any vegetable in her garden, which is the only thing in life she seems to have any knowlege of. Unfortunately for the poor girl, she will have a very large estate, and her mother thinks it unnecessary she should have any thing else to recommend her. I really pity the poor thing; for, no doubt, she will, some time or other, find her ignorance a great inconvenience to her. What ill-judging people they must be, who can look on money as a good substitute for all the useful and agreeable qualifications of the mind.

I will lay this by for a while, in hopes of hearing from you; besides the Miss Boyle's are come in to tea, and I dare say, I shall have no more time for writing this evening.

November 18th. I guessed right when I said I should have no time for writing that

that day. The young ladies were eaſily prevailed on to ſtay ſupper, as their father was not expected home till next day, he was gone ſome miles off to ſee a friend. We had alſo ſome gentlemen that Charles had brought home with him, and we were a very chearful happy party: my mother was quite delighted, for you know how happy ſhe is to ſee me pleaſed: and I had the ſatisfaction to find that her preſence was no reſtraint on the young folks. Indeed it need not, for though ſhe is elderly and not healthy, ſhe does not forget ſhe was once young herſelf: and therefore endeavours to promote innocent mirth in youth, which, as ſhe ſays, is the proper ſeaſon for it; and ſhe is loved and reſpected accordingly. I am ſure her advice would have much greater weight with them, than that of any of your formal peeviſh old ladies, who having loſt a reliſh for amuſements themſelves are continually preaching againſt them, be they ever ſo innocent, or moderately purſued.

The gentlemen ſtaid here till this morning, and we had a good deal of company in the forenoon, ſome of them ſtaid dinner.

Yeſterday we all ſpent an agreeable evening at Bell-Park, by invitation; both the ladies are proficients on the Harpſicord, and have ſweet voices; and one of our gentlemen played enchantingly on the flute; ſo we made up a little concert, and the cards were laid aſide, except Mr. Boyle, who challenged my mother at picquet, and was not a little pleaſed at beating her, becauſe ſhe plays the game infinitely ſuperior to him.

I have juſt received your epiſtle; how could you be ſo teaſing as to ſay you had a ſecret to tell me? and then leave me to puzzle my brains about it, perhaps for this week to come: you ſuppoſe every one to have as little curioſity as yourſelf; though you know it is a legacy deſcended to us from our grandmother Eve, of which very few have not a large ſhare.

I have thought of all the young men that viſit you, but cannot recollect that Gertrude ever ſhewed the ſmalleſt partiality for one of them; though I know ſome of them admired her much: who can it be? I may as well bid you adieu, for

for I can neither think or write of any thing but this ſecret; ſo you need not expect to hear from me again till you tell it me.

Your's,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Nov. 17. —

I HAVE retired to my chamber rather earlier than uſual, that I may acknowlege the receipt of my dear Eliza's laſt favour; and gratify her curioſity, which, I find, is at the higheſt pitch.

I really did not think of diſtracting your mind ſo much, when I mentioned Gertrude's affair, as it would not have had that effect on me; and when I conſidered, that I had no right to diſcloſe another perſon's ſecrets: I determined to tell you my ſcruples on that head, and leave you in ignorance till time ſhould diſcover it. However, your letter made me alter my mind, and Gertrude being preſent, I ſhewed it to her, and telling her I had thoughtleſsly given you a hint of it, aſked her permiſſion to inform you of the affair. She ſmiled at your eagerneſs to know the event, and ſaid, it would be a pity to deprive me of ſuch an agreeable correſpondent

on

on that account, as ſhe was ſure it would be ſafe with Miſs Fitzgerald: and ſhe believed you would make allowances for the weakneſs of her heart, your own was ſo ſuſceptible. So you ſee, my dear, your tenderneſs is very viſible, though you flattered yourſelf no one perceived it but me.

As to this love tale, you may gueſs, it was mere accident diſcovered it to me; for as you obſerve, I have very little curioſity. But if I had ever ſo much, it could not have been excited in this caſe, becauſe I had no ſuſpicion: and thus it happened.

A few days before I wrote to you laſt, I was to have company in the evening; and when I was dreſſed, ſtepped into Gertrude's chamber to aſk her ſome queſtions; ſhe ſat with her back towards me, ſo loſt in thought, that ſhe never heard me, though I was near enough to ſee. She held in her hand a miniature picture of a beautiful youth, in the uniform of the French military, on which her eyes were intently fixed. You cannot imagine what an aukward ſituation I found myſelf in, when I ſaw ſhe had not heard me. I felt as if I had purpoſely ſtolen on her privacy,

cy, though I was conſcious I had not; but it muſt appear ſo to her. I therefore, thought, if I could go out unperceived, it would ſave us both a deal of confuſion; and was turning about to do ſo, when the ruſtling of my gown againſt her chair, rouſed her from her reverie, and ſtartled her ſo much, that I thought ſhe would have fainted: I am ſure I looked very ſilly myſelf, but thinking it beſt to take no notice of what had paſſed, I aſked the queſtion I came about, and then ſaying I ſuppoſed ſhe would ſoon be ready to come down, I left her to recover herſelf from the flutter into which I had unintentionally thrown her.

She did not come into the drawing-room, till ſome of the company were come, and I could obſerve, her ſpirits ſeemed quite diſtreſſed; but ſhe exerted herſelf to conceal it, and as ſhe is naturally rather ſerious, it paſſed unnoticed by every one alſo. I paid more than uſual attention to her, that ſhe might ſee I was not offended at her reſerve: for I am certain, it proceeded more from baſhfulneſs than want of confidence in my friendſhip. Though ſhe lived ſo long in France, ſhe ſtill has

that

that amiable modeſty, which is there call-ed, MAU VAIS HONTE; but which in my opinion, is quite becoming in a young girl, though it is now reckoned a capital offence againſt all the rules of good-breed-ing to be capable of bluſhing. And it is part of the buſineſs of French dancing-maſters, to cure their pupils of that vul-gar propenſity, and ſubſtitute an aſſur-ance, that will enable a Miſs of fourteen to come into a room full of company with a broad ſtare, as if ſhe meant to defy them to put her out of countenance. An undaunted woman of any age, is, I think, ſhocking, but in a young creature it is abſolutely diſguſting: beſides, ſetting a girl above ſhame, is breaking through one of the ſtrongeſt barriers of female virtue: and we ſee daily examples of it in Eng-land, where the faſhionable mode of edu-cation has introduced a levity amongſt the women, that even out-does their neigh-bours on the Continent. I much fear we ſhall catch the infection; for where the intercourſe is ſo frequent, it will be next to a miracle if the contagion does not ſpread; and I have long obſerved, that neither the manners nor morals of my country

country people are at all improved by a jaunt to England.

You will ſay I have wandered far from my ſubject; but I intend giving Gertrude's ſtory a ſheet of paper to itſelf, that your patience may not be put to ſuch a trial, as being obliged to go through ſo much of my letter to come at it.

I congratulate you on the acquiſition of ſuch agreeable neighbours, and hope they will come to town, that I may endeavour to rival your mother in Mr. Boyle's good graces; for I ſhould like of all things, to have a flirt above fifty, and I ſuppoſe he is that age at leaſt. And beſides that, I would try to cure Miſs Harriet of her affectation, which, by your deſcription, is the greateſt defect ſhe has. Well, there is none of us perfect; ſo we muſt take human nature as we find it, and make allowance for its frailties: it is beſt to laugh people out of their follies, and be ſevere on their vices.

I know who your female vegetable is, it was the happieſt idea you ever had, for you could not chuſe a more ſuitable appellation. I am by no means ſurpriſed that

that her mother ſhould think a large eſtate required no other qualification, becauſe ſhe herſelf had no other; and to be ſure her father is of the ſame opinion, as it was all he thought neceſſary in a wife. Is it not amazing that any man of ſenſe, can make choice of a woman to paſs his life with, that has not a ſufficient underſtanding to make her an agreeable companion, even for an hour? yet one ſees ſuch wives every day; and the poor things think they are of great conſequence, and have anſwered all the purpoſes of their creation, if they can ſcold their ſervants, and ſwarm the houſe with children, though they are totally incapable of inſtructing their children in any one thing that is proper for them to know. I have no doubt but the men chuſe them, that their own ſuperiority in wiſdom and knowledge may appear to greater advantage by the contraſt, and ſome of them, I am ſure, dread a competitor in thoſe things.

I ſhould have a bad opinion of your viſitors, if they diſliked your mother's company. A woman of her diſpoſition, though not very young, cannot be a reſtraint on any one, unleſs they wiſh to

behave improperly. Good night, I must begin my story, which will keep me up an hour longer, and I feel I shall be very sleepy before it is finished.

Your's, affectionately,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

Count de ROUSSILLON, and Miſs S. GEORGE.

GERTRUDE came into my chamber next morning juſt as I was riſing; and telling Sally ſhe would aſſiſt me to dreſs, as ſhe wiſhed to be alone with me; the girl withdrew, and with much heſitation and viſible confuſion, ſhe began, ſaying; the diſcovery I had made the day before, diſtreſſed her more than ſhe would expreſs, leſt I ſhould imagine her reſerve proceeded from want of confidence in my affection for her, which ſhe earneſtly aſſured me, was not the caſe: ſhe ſhould think herſelf very ungrateful if it was. But indeed, couſin, ſaid ſhe, bluſhing to death, the truth is, I could never get reſolution enough to tell you.

I had entangled myſelf in ſuch an affair while I was ſo very young—Here I interrupted her, to clear myſelf of any deſign, to pry into her ſecrets, and requeſted ſhe would not think herſelf under any obligation to diſcloſe them, if it gave her the leaſt pain. She knew me too well not to be convinced I ſpoke truth; but

ſaid, ſhe had long wiſhed to break it to me, and now, that accident had done that for her, ſhe would take the opportunity of opening her whole mind to me.

You already know my aunt St. George's ill health obliged her to reſide above two years at Montpelier; during that time, Gertrude contracted an intimacy with a young lady of her own age, daughter to the Count de Rouſſillon, whoſe chatteau was in the neighbourhood. Her mother alſo became acquainted with the Count and Counteſs, who were very polite, and even friendly to any genteel ſtrangers, who frequented the town: our friends received uncommon civilities from them; for they inſiſted on their paſſing great part of their time with them, which made their ſtay very agreeable, eſpecially to Gertrude, who found a moſt pleaſing companion in Mademoiſelle Adelaide; ſhe often heard the young Count mentioned in the family, particularly by his ſiſter, who ſpoke of him with all that fond partiality, which the ties of blood and affection are apt to create; and frequently wiſhed his return, that ſhe might introduce him to her pretty Iriſh woman, by which

which appellation Gertrude was known at Montpellier: she had been more than a year there, before the young gentleman, who was at the Military Academy, came home.

He arrived one day, rather unexpected, and a messenger was immediately dispatched to bring my aunt and cousin to the Chatteau, to rejoice with the family on the occasion. Adelaide presented Gertrude to him, with a thousand kind expressions in her favour; and told him, she loved her better than any woman in the world: a French man could not say less than, he would love her as well as she did, which was really the answer he made: and it seems it was prophetic; for he very soon shewed an attachment to her, but it passed unnoticed, as it would there be thought unpolite in a young man, not to behave with some degree of gallantry to a girl, who was so often at the house. He was only a year older than his sister, and there was a remarkable similitude both in their persons and dispositions, which was exceedingly amiable: the first created admiration, the latter esteem. No wonder, the unguarded heart of my young cousin, fell a victim to the charms

of mind and perſon, united in this agreeable foreigner, whoſe conſtant ſtudy it was to render himſelf pleaſing to her; and the perfect amity that ſubſiſted between him and his ſiſter, gave him continual opportunities of recommending himſelf to her favour, in which, I find, he ſucceeded ſo well, that when he declared his paſſion to her, ſhe was, before they parted, brought to acknowlege, ſhe would have no objection, if the conſent of their parents could be obtained.

When ſhe related this circumſtance, ſhe ſeemed aſhamed at having ſo ſoon confeſſed her ſentiments to him; but told me, it happened one evening that the beautiful ſerenity of the ſky invited Adelaide and her to take their Guitars to a delightful arbour in the garden, by which a gentle rivulet murmured. There they were entertaining themſelves with ſome of David Rizzio's moſt plaintive Scotch airs, when the young Count joined them: and while the pleaſing effects of the ſoft melody was ſtill powerful in her heart, he made his declaration, and his ſiſter pleaded ſo earneſtly in his favour, that ſhe could not refuſe to their joint ſolicitations, the acknowlegement of ſentiments which her prudence

prudence told her ſhe ſhould have concealed.

The old gentleman having an employment at court, was then attending the King at Verſailles, and the young folks agreed, not to mention it to their mothers, till his return, when his ſon was to aſk his approbation, which he had no idea would be refuſed, as Gertrude was a great favourite with him, and her fortune and connexions were ſuch, as he could not object to.

Their time rolled on in uninterrupted ſcenes of happineſs and content during three months that the Count remained at court; but his return daſhed all their proſpects of felicity; and the diſappointment was the more ſenſibly felt, becauſe it was unexpected. It was, however, a chaſtiſement they in ſome meaſure deſerved, for allowing their affections to be ſo ſtrongly engaged, before they knew that their parents would approve it.

Louis (that was the youth's name) could not mention it to his father, the day he came home, but determined he would defer it no longer than the morning. That evening

evening the Count ſent for him to his ſtudy, and after informing him, he was appointed to a company in the Count D'Artois' regiment, ſaid, he had ſtill better news, which was, he had agreed with the Marquis de Bretagne, to conclude a marriage between him and that nobleman's only daughter; who, as he knew, was a moſt amiable young lady, the King himſelf had been ſo kind to propoſe it, and the Marquis and he had joyfully conſented to it, as it would be a ſtill ſtronger cement to the friendſhip that had ſo long ſubſiſted between them.

This diſcourſe was like a thunder clap to the young Count; and for ſome minutes totally deprived him of utterance; during which time his father went on, enumerating the many advantages that would attend his alliance with a family ſo powerful at court, not to ſpeak of the fortune ſhe would bring him, which was much larger than his eſtate, (though a good one,) entitled him to expect; and concluded, by bidding him prepare to ſet out for Verſailles in two days to make his acknowlegements to his Majeſty for his goodneſs to him, as well in that affair, as in promoting him, before he had ever

joined

joined his regiment; (for it ſeems he has had a commiſſion ſince ever he was born, which the late King, who was his godfather, preſented him with on that occaſion;) and alſo, to pay his compliments to the young lady; for they meant to celebrate the marriage as ſoon as the neceſſary preparations could be made.

By that time the old gentleman had ceaſed ſpeaking, his ſon had recovered the uſe of his ſpeech, and ventured to ſay, he was ſorry they had gone ſo far, before they knew that the young lady would be diſpoſed to accept of him; and hinted the difference of religion, as an objection to the match; for his family are Proteſtants; but his father who could not bear the leaſt contradiction, flew in a violent paſſion at his raiſing any difficulty, and told him, the thing was determined, and nothing ſhould make him recede from his word, or affront the Marquis, by mentioning ſuch a frivolous obſtacle: and ſternly ordering him to take care that he acquitted himſelf properly in his addreſſes to the lady, he flung out of the room, and left poor Louis in a ſtate of mind not be deſcribed. Unable to fix on any rule of conduct for himſelf, he went to his

ſiſter's

ſiſter's apartment, to whom he related the cauſe of his diſtreſs. Adelaide, who tenderly loved her brother, and had a ſincere affection for Gertrude, was much affected at the diſappointment of their fond hopes, but too well knew her father's determined temper, to hope to move him, by telling him the true ſtate of his ſon's heart, which ſhe judged would at preſent only exaſperate him; ſhe therefore adviſed he ſhould carefully conceal it from every one, but the young lady herſelf, to whom he ſhould reveal it in confidence; and if ſhe deſerved half the praiſes ſhe had heard given her, ſhe would ſpare him the indelicacy of refuſing her, as well as the pain of diſobliging his father. She was ſurprized he made light of the difference of religion, becauſe he was ſtrongly attached to his own, and ſaid, ſhe thought it an unſurmountable obſtacle, even if his heart had no pre-engagement: he aſſured her, he did not mention it merely to raiſe an objection, but becauſe it was his ſentiments; that people of different perſuaſions could not be happy in marriage, as the education of their children would be a continual ſource of uneaſineſs; and as Mademoiſelle was reckoned very ſenſible, he

he had hopes she would be of the same opinion.

He then requested his sister would break the matter to Gertrude, in the best manner she could, and procure him an interview with her the next day; she promised to do so, and having consoled him greatly by her conversation, he retired from her apartment, much more composed than when he entered it.

Next day Adelaide ordered her carriage, saying, she would call on Gertrude to take an airing with her, which she often did, and the Countess bid her engage Mrs. St. George too, to come and spend the day with them, which she accordingly did; and my aunt having some morning visitors, promised to be at the chatteau by the time they returned from their airing. Adelaide, who was well pleased she did not offer to go with them, as soon as she found herself alone with Gertrude, informed her as cautiously as she could, of what had passed between Louis and his father, and with all the tenderness of friendship, pointed out to her, the reason they had to expect the lady would refuse him; but to prevent her being any way

alarmed,

alarmed, assured her, from her brother, that though he held himself bound by duty, not to marry without his father's consent, nothing could ever prevail on him to think of any other woman.

Gertrude says, she received this intelligence with more fortitude than she thought she was possessed of; but the truth is, her pride was hurt, that any man should think it necessary to conceal his attachment to her: she therefore told Adelaide, it would give her much concern to be the cause of any misunderstanding between the Count and his son, to prevent which, she would advise him to marry the lady that was chose for him. As for her, she never would have encouraged his addresses, had she thought it probable there could be any objection; but since there was, her rank in life set her above forcing herself into any family against their consent; (are not you proud of her spirit?)

Adelaide seemed surprised at her manner of receiving news which she thought would greatly affect her; but no doubt, quickly penetrating into the real cause, she took her hand, and said, my dear Gertrude intirely misconstrues my meaning; I can

safely

ſafely affirm, that every one of our family would think themſelves honoured by a connexion with you: the misfortune lies in my brother not having declared his attachment to you before my father went to Paris; he left home ſuppoſing his ſon's heart diſengaged; and, at the King's deſire agreed to marry him to the daughter of his deareſt friend; that, ſurely, cannot be looked on as an affront to you. I acknowlege my father's fault is obſtinacy, he never will retract from a reſolution once taken, and expects unlimited obedience from his children, in ſuch a caſe. Your own good ſenſe will ſhew you the impropriety of mentioning the affair to him now; eſpecially when we have fixed on a ſcheme very likely to ſucceed, without provoking my father. Let me then beſeech you, not to add to the inquietude my poor brother labours under, by expreſſing a diſpleaſure he really does not deſerve from you.

Gertrude, who could not but aſſent to the truth of what Adelaide ſaid, promiſed ſhe would not; but was determined in her own mind, not to be prevailed on to enter into any private engagement with him, which ſhe doubted not he would

propoſe at the interview ſhe had conſented to give him. It being near dinner-time, they returned to the Chatteau, where they found my aunt and a widow lady of the neighbourhood. The day paſſed off not ſo agreeable as uſual; for the Counteſs and Adelaide were low-ſpirited at parting with Louis ſo ſoon; and he and Gertrude, you may think, could not be very lively: ſo that my aunt and the other lady were the only, unconcerned perſons, and kept the reſt from being quite ſilent. After they had taken their coffee, the three old ladies and the Count ſat down to quadrille, and the three young folks went into the garden, and entering their favourite arbour, ſat down to enjoy the pleaſing ſcene, and liſten to the ſweet warbling of an infinite variety of birds, that inhabited the trees around them: the ſoft notes charmed them for a while to ſilence; but the young Count could not long defer the ſubject next his heart; and told his tale ſo pathetically, that Gertrude could with difficulty refuſe a promiſe he endeavoured to draw from her; but ſhe thought it too humiliating to engage herſelf to wait for a man, whoſe father would, perhaps, never conſent to their union. She, therefore,

fore, did refuſe it, though he ſolemnly ſwore, never to marry any other woman, while ſhe remained ſingle.

She had intended to return his picture, and demand her's which he had, [they were both of his own drawing] but his diſtraction was ſo great at parting with her, that ſhe thought it ſhould be barbarous to mention it; and I dare ſay, was well pleaſed to have any excuſe for keeping the dear reſemblance.

The farewel was, no doubt, very tender on his ſide; and, I believe, a little ſo on hers', notwithſtanding all her diſcretion. However, upon the whole, ſhe certainly behaved heroically, if we conſider her youth, for ſhe was but fifteen; and that ſhe really loved the man, his merit and the pains he took to win her heart, is ſufficient apology. She determined not to tell her mother, leſt ſhe ſhould be uneaſy on her account, and ſhe had come to a reſolution, not to let it prey on her ſpirits, but wait patiently to ſee how matters would turn out.—

He ſet off with his father very early the next morning, and the firſt account

ſhe had from him, was in a letter to his ſiſter, wherein he informed her, he had waited on the lady, but had no occaſion to make her his confidant, for knowing the motive of his viſit, ſhe, with a pleaſing frankneſs, told him, he might ſpare himſelf the trouble of declaring it, for there was an inſuperable objection to their union; which was, his Religion. She had been educated in a Convent, where ſhe had imbibed all the uncharitable doctrines of Popery: and ſaid, ſhe hoped he could not take it amiſs if ſhe told him, ſhe could not think of riſking her ſalvation by marrying a Heretic; for in this caſe, ſhe thought it beſt to ſpeak plain, that he might know her reſolution was fixed.

He ſaid all that was proper on the occaſion, and left her with a heart quite at eaſe; but found it neceſſary to conceal his ſatisfaction, when he came into his father's preſence, to whom he related her anſwer. The Count had ſcarce patience to hear him out; taking it for granted, the fault was intirely his, as he had, at firſt mention of the affair, made that objection. He was in an abſolute rage; and though Louis gave him all the aſſurances poſſible, that the lady had pronounced her refuſal before he

he had well ſpoke, it was to no purpoſe. He forbid him to appear in his ſight; and next day ſent him an order from the King to repair to his regiment, and not preſume to leave it without his Majeſty's particular permiſſion.

He was then preparing to obey this unwelcome command; and as it was very uncertain when he ſhould be able to plead his own cauſe, he requeſted his ſiſter to be his advocate with her fair friend, and if poſſible, to keep up an intereſt for him in her heart.

He ſoon after wrote to her under cover to his ſiſter, which he ſtill continues to do, though ſhe never anſwers his letters, except by meſſages in thoſe ſhe writes to Adelaide.

I have ſeen his letters; they are ſenſible and well-wrote, but full of thoſe paſſionate exclamations, with which FRENCH love-letters always abound, but which in our language ſounds very ill; at leaſt I think, Ah! Oh! and Alas! have a mighty bad effect in an Engliſh letter. But to proceed with my ſtory: the war breaking out, my aunt determined to ſet out for

Ireland, and Gertrude did not at all regret quitting France, as the Counteſs and Adelaide were ſoon to go to Paris, where the Count's employment obliged him to reſide during the war. The parting was very painful to the young friends, who promiſed a mutual correſpondence, as often as opportunity would permit: and it is ſtill continued, though Adelaide was married very ſoon after ſhe went to Paris, to a man of large fortune, M. de St. Veriolle. Her father's diſpleaſure againſt his ſon, is not yet removed, nor can they prevail on him to get leave for him to come home to ſee them before the regiment embarks, which is now under orders for America.

Though Gertrude would not give him a promiſe, I believe he is quite as ſecure of her as if ſhe had, for ſhe is now her own miſtreſs, and ſeems not the leaſt inclined to encourage any other. She never told her mother a word of it; indeed it was uſeleſs to give her any diſquiet about it; as the cold ſhe got on her journey occaſioned ſuch a rapid decline of her health, (before very precarious) that as you know, ſhe did not ſurvive above two months after her coming home.

Having

Having always lived with my father, ſince her widowhood, and after his death with me, ſhe requeſted Gertrude ſhould remain in my houſe till ſhe was married, if agreeable to us both, which ſhe hoped it would be; for though Gertrude was by her father's will to be of age at ſixteen, yet ſhe thought that too young for a girl to be left to her own direction, and as I was a few years older, and had more experience, ſhe wiſhed Gertrude would be always adviſed by me, whoſe affection for her, ſhe was ſure, ſhe might depend upon. You know it has been my ſtudy to make her happy: I thought her rather ſerious for her age; and wondered ſhe had not got ſome of the French vivacity, as ſhe went amongſt them while a child. I did not then ſuſpect her heart had learned a leſſon which is apt to give a thoughtful turn to the moſt ſprightly temper.

She ſeemed very apprehenſive of loſing my good opinion, by informing me of this affair, as ſhe was perfectly ſenſible her conduct in it, would not bear to be ſcrutinized by any unprejudiced perſon. I freely blamed her for giving him any encouragement, without firſt acquainting her

mother

mother, and bid her obſerve, that all the uneaſineſs ſhe had ſuffered ſince, was in conſequence of that one deviation from the path of duty; had they both conſulted their parents in proper time, it is moſt probable there would have been no obſtacle to their happineſs. I praiſed her, however, for her diſcretion in the other circumſtances, particularly refuſing to contract herſelf to him; and ſhe was quite happy that I approved any part of her conduct. I hope you will acknowlege yourſelf under uncommon obligations to me, for ſitting up half a night to write a love-tale for you. I now leave you to read it, for my eyes are juſt cloſing.

Ever your's,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Nov. 20. —

I HAVE juſt received my dear Louiſa's packet of the 17th Inſt. and do indeed acknowlege myſelf much obliged to you, for ſacrificing a night's reſt to gratify my curioſity. Could I have had a notion the ſtory would run to ſuch a length, I ſhould not have been ſo unreaſonable as to aſk you to communicate it, but I thought it was ſomething that had lately occurred, and would be related in a few lines. Inſtead of that, it is quite a little novel; and has afforded me an hour's pleaſing amuſement. I ſincerely hope it may end happily for Gertrude and her agreeable French-man.

Your obſervations were very juſt: ſhe was certainly wrong in concealing it from her mother at firſt; however, I could make a thouſand excuſes for her, and to tell truth, I fear had I been in her ſituation, I ſhould

ſhould not have been above half ſo prudent. I think ſhe muſt have had an uncommon ſhare of reſolution to refuſe his requeſt at their laſt meeting: but no doubt, being ſo nearly related, ſhe has a tincture of your philoſophy: nothing leſs could enable her to reſiſt the ſolicitations of the man ſhe loved, when conſiſtent with virtue. I own it was perfectly prudent; and I think ſhe deſerves great praiſe for it. But you will grant it requires a degree of fortitude ſeldom to be met with in ſo young a perſon, to act up to our duty in every reſpect, on an occaſion where the heart is ſo much concerned. For my part, I am thankful I never had any ſuch trials. As I have great doubts of myſelf, for I know I am but too ſuſceptible of tenderneſs, though I hoped no one had made the obſervation but you, who are acquainted with the inmoſt receſſes of my mind; for though I have been ſo fortunate as to place my affections juſt where my friends wiſhed, I ſhould be ſorry to deviate from the paths of delicacy in my behaviour; which I really think would be the caſe if my attachment to Mr. Skeffington was viſible to ſtrangers: but I flatter myſelf, Gertrude being an adept herſelf, has more denetration in theſe matters than the generality

nerality of people. I am ſatisfied at her diſcovering my ſuſceptibility, as it procured me her confidence; and ſhe may be ſure, I ſhall make all the allowance for her weakneſs (if it deſerves that name) which I ſhould hope for myſelf in like caſe; being in ſome-what of ſimilar circumſtances, uſually makes one follow the Chriſtian Doctrine, of doing as we would be done by; though I am ſorry to ſay, we are but too apt to forget that beſt of all Rules, where we do not think the ſituation is ever likely to be our own.

Be ſure inform me whenever there is news from France; for I ſhall long to hear if the Count lets his ſon go to America without ſeeing him: if he does, I ſhall hate him, it will betray ſuch a want of paternal affection.

Tell Gertrude, when I go to town I will expect to ſee the letters, now that we are all En Confidance; I dare ſay you muſt both have felt aukward enough, when you made the unexpected diſcovery; though ſhe that is ſo well acquainted with your diſpoſition, muſt at once acquit you of any deſign to pry into her ſecrets: but accident ſometimes leads one into ſituati-

ons

ons extremely diſagreeable, and which makes one ſeem to themſelves as if they had done wrong, though conſcious they did not mean it ſo; which I am ſure was altogether your caſe. The accident will be of uſe to Gertrude, for now the ice is broke, ſhe will not be aſhamed to conſult you on the affair, when ſhe has occaſion for advice. After the hint you had given me, I ſhould have ſcarce admitted your qualm of conſcience as an excuſe for withholding the reſt of the ſtory; ſo you did well to get permiſſion to tell it; yet I muſt acknowlege, that without that permiſſion, you had no right to divulge it; and there was no fear but you could recollect that, for I never knew you to deviate from the right path: or if you did, it was but momentary, and you recovered your ſtep immediately. Why do not I always think ſo juſtly? eſpecially when your example has been continually before me; for you have acted according to the rule of right, as long as I have remembered you; at leaſt as long as I have been capable of judging.——

You did not mention Emily in your laſt, nor couſin James, but once ſince he went to town; he writes to Charles often, but

their

their correſpondence is chiefly on political affairs; ſo we have all that ſort of news from him. I need not tell you he is a ſtaunch patriot; indeed I hope none of my family will ever be otherwiſe, for there is ſomething ſo unnatural in deſerting the intereſt of our country, that I could not have a good opinion of any one that was guilty of it; beſides, it is ſuch a meanneſs of ſpirit in a man of family, to ſubmit to be made the tool of any Adminiſtration, that I could not help deſpiſing ſuch a one, if he was my brother; I think the King cannot confer any honour equal to that of being an honeſt man, and a ſteady patriot: Court favours are no longer deſirable when they ceaſe to be the reward of merit; Charles is of the ſame opinion; ſo I do not fear he will be diſgraced by any when he is a Senator.

I have often wondered what could be the reaſon that the very young ladies of this age were ſo amazingly undaunted when firſt brought into company, but I did not then know it was a ſcience they were made to ſtudy under their dancing-maſters; I am obliged to you for the information, for while I thought it was natural to them, I cannot but ſay, it gave

me very great diſguſt; now I know it is acquired, I am in hopes ſome of them may have a little modeſty in their hearts, though they are aſhamed to ſhew it. But I agree with you, that taking pains to eradicate the natural baſhfulneſs of the ſex may be of very bad conſequence to their virtue; and certainly a girl that keeps genteel company, will of courſe learn an eaſy behaviour, without being taught an impudent ſtare.

What a pretty picture you have drawn of ignorant women, and a very juſt one too; it brought freſh to my memory ſome ladies of our acquaintance, who are, I think, the originals from which your piece is taken: I viſit them as ſeldom as I can, becauſe I am ſure to be entertained with nothing elſe but the careleſsneſs of their waiting-maid, and the wit of their children: now, though I will allow the little creature's prattle may be perfectly entertaining to a parent, or even to a ſtranger if they were preſent, it will very ſeldom bear a repetition: however, I muſt acknowlege it is generally as ſenſible as any thing the mother could ſay; for a woman whoſe mind is uncultivated, ſcarce ever ſays any thing to the purpoſe. You are

rather

rather ſevere on the men who marry ſuch women, yet there is no other way of accounting for their choice; and I have often obſerved, that men would rather paſs their time with the meereſt trifler of our ſex than with a girl who is reckoned ſenſible, and has read a good deal; which is no great credit to their underſtanding, and a clear proof of their inconſiſtency; for they are ever accuſing us of neglecting to improve our minds; yet where mental accompliſhments are to be found, they ſeem afraid of the poſſeſſor. I am come to the end of my paper before I obſerved it, and have only room to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your affectionate,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER VIII.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Nov. 24. —

I SHALL now be more punctual in anſwering my dear Eliza's letters than I have been hitherto, for as Emily will be with me ſome time, I ſhall not think it neceſſary to confine myſelf to her ſo much as while I thought her ſtay would be very ſhort; and ſhe has requeſted I would not uſe any ceremony with her, indeed I never meant it in that light, but gave up my time to her purely to enjoy as much of her company as I could, becauſe ſhe meant to ſtay but two or three weeks; it is now probable you will find her in Dublin when you come, for her father and mother are coming up.

Mr. O'Neil had lately a ſudden attack of the gout in his ſtomach, it was ſoon removed, but has alarmed him ſo much, that he is coming to town for advice, and will ſtay the winter, for fear of a return of his complaint: there is not a good phyſician within

in many miles of his houſe, and only there was one attending at a neighbour's when he was taken ill, he might have died before he could get help: he never thought of that inconvenience while he was in health, but with the fear of death before his eyes, it appears very terrible to him.

Emily has taken lodgings for them very near us, it was a houſe he deſired, but all the furniſhed houſes were ſet,—which ſhe is not ſorry for, becauſe ſhe could not have excuſed herſelf from ſtaying with them if they had room for her, and ſhe would much rather be with me, though no child can be fonder of parents than ſhe is, but her father has ſome particularities, that makes it not pleaſing to live with him; ſuch as going to bed at ten o'clock, and expecting all his family to do the ſame; at leaſt they muſt be at home at that hour, and cannot have company after it, as the doors are then locked, and the keys taken to his room. He makes no allowance for the alteration of cuſtoms and manners ſince he was a young man; ſo if his daughter was with him, ſhe could neither pay nor receive any but morning viſits, unleſs ſhe could prevail on the people to dine and ſup at the ſame hours they did forty years ago.

Mr. O'Neil was an old batchelor when he married, and had got ſeveral oddities, (as people who live alone are apt to do) which he ſtill retains, for his wife, though a very young woman, accommodated herſelf to his ways, by which means he never was broke off them, as it is likely he would have been, had ſhe gone a little more into the gay world; but ſhe was juſt the gentle temper of Emily, and feared even a grave look; it was all ſhe had to fear, for he was not an ill-tempered man, as I have heard my father ſay, who blamed her for not bringing him off theſe peculiarities which makes men diſagreeable that would otherwiſe be very pleaſing. If ever I marry an old batchelor, I ſhall take pains to make him as pleaſing as I can.

You obſerved I did not mention Emily, I hope you are ſatisfied now I have filled half my paper about her and her family. As to your couſin James, I knew he wrote to Mr. Skeffington, and concluded you muſt know more of him than I could, though he often favours me with his company, and I am always glad to ſee him, for I do not put him on a footing with ſome others that viſit me, becauſe one gets both

both information and entertainment from his converſation. If I am any judge in theſe matters, his heart is not quite ſo whole as when he came to town, not that he has given the ſmalleſt hint to the contrary; but his behaviour to Mrs. Rochford ſhews it very plain: the minute attentions, or as the French expreſs it, LE PETIT SOINS, are never thought of but by a lover. Any man of politeneſs will think of all the civilities which they know we expect from them; but none but a man in love will think of attending to every trifling circumſtance that may occur. I never yet found myſelf miſtaken in the obſervation; however, I would not have you mention it to Charles, leſt he ſhould hint it to Mr. Fitzgerald, who would know you had it from me, and there would be an indelicacy in it's coming from her friends: I would not caution you about it, only I know, you think Charles is all diſcretion, and to be intruſted with any ſecret; but I know the men all tell each other thoſe ſort of ſecrets.—I have teized Emily a good deal on the ſubject, but ſhe affects not to perceive his attachment; and when I tell her that is only to make him ſpeak plain, ſhe prims

prims and looks ſo matronly, and ſo diſcreet, that I am obliged to be ſilent. She certainly does not diſlike him; but I am convinced ſhe would not at preſent liſten to any man on that ſubject; ſhe has too juſt notions of propriety: beſides her unhappineſs in marriage is ſo recent in her memory, that I think ſhe will conſider well, before ſhe enters into the ſtate again; was I in her place, I ſhould have got a compleat ſurfeit.

I cannot accept of your compliment, becauſe I feel I am by no means the perfect creature which your partial friendſhip has deſcribed me; though I am ſure you only ſay what you have perſuaded yourſelf to think; it does not, however, require ſuch a ſhare of philoſophy as you ſeem to imagine, to enable us to controul our paſſions when we are accuſtomed to to give way to them, in oppoſition to our reaſon; and I think myſelf infinitely obliged to my parents, for teaching me to curb them before they grew ungovernable: ſo that what you call philoſophy, is purely the effects of a proper education, enforced, I acknowlege, by religious motives, ſince I have been capable of comprehending them; for though I am of a very

very chearful turn of mind, I can think ſeriouſly on ſubjects of importance.

Gertrude is highly flattered by your approbation, and ſays, ſhe begins to be better reconciled to herſelf, ſince you and I think her conduct excuſable. She bids me tell you, ſhe will let you ſee the letters when you come to town, and all that ſhe may yet receive from the Count; ſhe expects to hear ſoon, as he will certainly write before he goes to America.

Harry Maunſel ſurpriſed us juſt as we ſat down to tea laſt night, I did not expect him, for I had a letter from his ſiſter very lately, which mentioned his intention of going to Corke on buſineſs; but it ſeems ſome preſſing occaſion has brought him to Dublin; and he ſays, will detain him great part of the winter. I find Charles and he correſpond, and by ſome words he let fall, I am ſure he has mentioned his uneaſineſs about Mr. Hamilton to him; if ſo, it is probable we ſhall diſcover his real ſentiments, and whether, as you think, his reaſon has conquered his jealouſy; but as yet, I have no time to enter into a converſation on the ſubject.

Harry,

Harry, who has not ſeen Mrs. Rochfort ſince ſhe was with me, a year before her marriage, was ſo ſtruck with the lovelineſs of her countenance and figure, that I had ſome hopes ſhe would rival me, and obſerved him cloſely to ſee if it was ſo, but have reaſon to think his admiration was nothing more than the pleaſing effect which the firſt view of ſomething very beautiful always has on the mind, but which, as it grows familiar to the ſight, ceaſes to attract the attention. You will think it an odd expreſſion, to ſay, I had hopes of being rivalled; however, for his ſake, I ſincerely wiſh it had been the caſe.

Is Charles as great a book-worm as ever? You ſhould endeavour to wean him a little from his ſtudies, as he is not to follow any profeſſion; it is high time he ſhould ſtudy the manners of the world, which he is really too ignorant of. I ſhall talk to Henry about giving him a little advice on that head, now I find there is ſuch an intimacy between them.

Gertrude begs you will not make yourſelf uneaſy at what ſhe ſaid of your ſuſceptibility

ceptibility; for though that is very perceptible, your delicacy remains unimpeached, in which opinion I join, and think you a good, decent behaved girl, notwithſtanding you are a perfect turtle in love and conſtancy. I wonder how it is that Charles and you have continued to like each other ſo long; it ſeldom happens that a fancy of that kind, taken in childhood, ſubſiſts when the parties grow up: beſides, from the manner you were reared together, I am ſurpriſed you did not rather miſtake each other for brother and ſiſter. Was I in your place, I ſhould be a little afraid the whole ſtock of tenderneſs on both ſides, would be exhauſted before marriage; if it is not, I can only ſay you have an amazing fund of it.

I wiſh Chriſtmas was over, that you might come to town; and on conſideration I do not ſee any neceſſity there was for your going almoſt two months before, that you might be there at the time; but Mrs. Fitzgerald is ſo methodical, ſhe does not like to break through old cuſtoms, and it is very fit you ſhould comply with her inclinations, her actions are always governed by ſome laudable motive.

What

What a long epiſtle here is, with little or nothing in it; however, as I am in a ſcribling vein, it is likely it would be ſtill longer, but luckily for you, who will have the fatigue of reading it, I muſt break off, for your couſin James and Harry Maunſell, are to gallant Gertrude and I to the play; and it is juſt tea-time, no doubt they will ſoon be here.. Emily ſpent the day at her aunt's, you may think ſhe does not as yet go to any public place, which has confined me a great deal. Our beaux are arrived; have only time to ſay, I am,

Dear Eliza's

very ſincere friend,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Nov. 25.—

DEAR ELIZA,

A Converſation I had with Harry Maunſell this Morning, determined me to write directly, though I had diſpatched a letter to you by laſt night's poſt; but as I think I have ſomething intereſting to ſay, I would not delay it a moment.

Harry was with me all the forenoon, and Emily and Gertrude being out ſhoping, I had an opportunity to ſpeak to him about the hint he dropt in regard to Mr. Hamilton. He immediately told me all he knew of the matter; he had it from Mr. Skeffington; and taking a letter out of his pocket, gave it to me to read. When I had finiſhed, I went for your firſt letter, and read the account you gave me of the affair; then obſerving to him, how neceſſary it was to your happineſs to

be acquainted with Charles's real ſenti-ments upon the occaſion; obtained per-miſſion to take a copy of it for your peru-ſal. Nothing but that conſideration could have tempted him to give it; but I aſ-ſured him, he might rely on your diſcre-tion, that you would deſtroy it as ſoon as read: you will eaſily ſee the neceſſity for ſo doing, and here you ſhall have the copy.

Caſtle-Skeffington, Nov. 10.—

DEAR MAUNSELL,

WE left Dublin on the 4th, as I in-formed you we ſhould, and ar-rived in due time; but met with an ad-venture on the road, which has rouſed a latent ſpark of jealouſy in my boſom, and given me ſo much uneaſineſs, that I could not ſufficiently compoſe my mind to write to you ſooner; though I never had more occaſion for your counſel.

A Mr. Hamilton of the county of Der-ry joined us on the laſt night of our jour-ney; he is, I muſt acknowlege, a moſt accompliſhed young man. Being lately returned from his travels, the converſa-tion

tion turned on the manners and cuſtoms of the places he had viſited, which he deſcribed with ſo much underſtanding, and elegance of expreſſion, that my aunt was delighted, and Eliza quite charmed, which gave me pangs I never felt before, and caſt ſuch a damp on my ſpirits, that I was incapable of taking any part in the converſation: every word ſhe addreſſed to him was a dagger to my heart, and the particular attention he paid her, added to my uneaſineſs; for his perſon is really faultleſs, and his addreſs perfectly pleaſing; attractions ſufficient to gain any woman, and alarm any man that loves as I do, and is not very partial to his own merit.

When he retired, the ladies were laviſh in his praiſe, and Eliza obſerved, what an advantage Travel was to young men of ſenſe, as it enlarged their ideas, and gave them a knowlege of the world, which they could never obtain from books alone. As I took this obſervation to be intirely directed to me, who wanted that advantage, it confirmed my ſuſpicions, and increaſed my ill temper; ſo that my gloomineſs was, I am ſure, apparent, for I caught Eliza attentively looking at me

ſeveral times, and my aunt taking notice of my ſilence, I was forced to pretend a head-ach, on which ſhe inſiſted I ſhould go to bed, and ever attentive to my health, ordered whey and hartſhorn to be given me; but knowing that was not a cure for my real complaint, you may gueſs I did not take it. I went to bed in a ſtate of mind little ſhort of diſtraction, and lay curſing the whole fickle ſex and my own misfortune, in being ſo ſtrongly attached to one of them, that I felt it impoſſible to tear her from my heart. The agitation I endured, at laſt fatigued my ſpirits, and threw me into a ſound ſleep: when I awoke, I found myſelf refreſhed and compoſed; and on revolving impartially, every circumſtance that had paſſed the preceding night, I was aſhamed to acknowlege to myſelf, that I had not any any one tolerable reaſon to aſſign for the ſuſpicions that gave me ſo much diſquiet. Convinced I had been in an error, I recovered my temper and my ſpirits, and met the ladies in my uſual manner: my aunt congratulated herſelf on the ſucceſs of her medicine, and Eliza, with a glow of pleaſure on her cheek, rejoiced I was ſo much better.

Mr.

Mr. Hamilton breakfaſted with us, and gave me a very genteel invitation to his houſe, where he will be before Chriſtmas; he regretted much we were ſo ſoon to part, and when we were ready, handed Eliza to the carriage, and took leave with ſuch expreſſions, and ſuch looks, as to me appeared a proof that ſhe had made a ſtrong impreſſion on his heart, which again diſconcerted me; but as ſhe remained quite chearful after he had left us, I curſed my riſing diſſatisfaction, to prevent her ſuſpecting the cauſe, but determined to take ſome method of diſcovering her ſentiments towards him: I abhor myſelf for the meanneſs this diſtracting paſſion made me commit. I queſtioned her maid, and even offered her money to betray her miſtreſs's ſecrets: ſhe ſtedfaſtly denied ever hearing her mention Mr. Hamilton, except to her mother or me.

I ſoon ſaw the impropriety I had been guilty of, in expoſing my weakneſs to this girl, and diſmiſſed her, ſaying, I only wanted to try her integrity. This happened early in the morning after our arrival, and when Eliza came down to breakfaſt, I gueſſed from her ſerious air,

when ſhe ſpoke to me, that her maid had informed her what paſſed between us, and I was ſoon after convinced of it; for being diſappointed of a letter ſhe expected to receive from Miſs Mortimer, I threw out ſome ſarcaſtical obſervations on female friendſhip and ſincerity, at which ſhe immediately took fire, and expreſſed herſelf with ſo much warmth, that I who knew myſelf in fault, was glad to make an apology; and finding I could not bear her diſpleaſure, ſpent the whole day in reinſtating myſelf in her favour, which from her natural ſweetneſs of temper, was not difficult to accompliſh; and we are now on as good terms as ever, but I can perceive ſhe watches me cloſely when there is any young men here, as if ſhe wiſhed to penetrate into my heart, and ſee if jealouſy ſtill lurked there; however, none of our viſitors raiſe any emotions of that kind in my boſom, as I think they do not poſſeſs any ſuperior degree of merit, and ſhe has, beſide been acquainted with them from her infancy, but I cannot be ſo eaſy in regard to Mr. Hamilton; for I feel that his preſence would quite deſtroy my peace, yet I wiſhed they would meet again, that I might know my fate, for I cannot bear ſuſpence, though I dread the certainty.

When

When ſhe is preſent my ſuſpicions vaniſh, and I am happy; but the inſtant I am alone, all my doubts return. Do, dear Maunſell, give me your advice and opinion. You that have loved, will, I am ſure, pity my anxiety, even though you may blame me.

I have thoughts of preſſing our marriage, which is delayed till I am of age, on account of ſettlements; if ſhe conſents, it will calm my fears, for I think I could not ſuſpect her virtue if ſhe was my wife; but I ſhall do nothing till I hear from you.

Your's,

C. SKEFFINGTON.

I believe

I believe this letter needs no comment to convince you, you were much deceived when you imagined he had conquered his foible; for it is plain, his good humour depended on Mr. Hamilton's abſence.

Perhaps Harry's arguments may by this time have had ſome effect on him; for he ſays, he placed the improbability of your giving him any cauſe of ſuſpicion in the ſtrongeſt light he could, and as it really appeared to him; but adviſed him to make his promiſed viſit to Mr. Hamilton, and bring him to the caſtle, that he might be certain he was cured of all doubts before he urged you to marry him; otherwiſe he would inſure miſery both to himſelf and you.

In his anſwer to Harry, he ſeemed aſhamed of his folly, and promiſed to follow his advice; ſo we muſt ſuſpend our judgment for a while: and I am more eaſy on that ſubject than I was, now I have a method of knowing his real ſentiments; for I was very apprehenſive you would be too willing to truſt to appearances, and deceive yourſelf into an opinion that

that he was juſt what you wiſhed him to be. He is in every other reſpect, a moſt eſtimable character, and wants only a little knowlege of the world to make him an accompliſhed young man.

I would, if I dare, adviſe his travelling for a couple of years, but I fear to give you pain by mentioning his abſence for ſo long a time; however, if you cannot bring yourſelf to bear it, I would have you marry, and go abroad with him; I mean when you are quite convinced he is cured of this fooliſh imagination that has poſſeſſed him. Is it not very unaccountable, that he who is, on other occaſions, rather too unſuſpecting, ſhould ſo ſuddenly grow ſuſpicious where he has leaſt cauſe? it muſt proceed from too humble an opinion of himſelf; if you could inſpire him with but half ſo high an idea of his own merit as moſt young men have, he would never be jealous again, and that I believe is the only advantage that can ſpring from ſelf-conceit.

Adieu, dear girl;
believe me,
ever your's,
LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER X.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Nov. 28. —

MY dear Louiſa's letters of the 24th and 25th, are now before me; and ſhall begin with the latter, as it is wholly on a ſubject in which I am deeply intereſted.

I was a good deal diſtreſſed when I read the copy you ſent me, for I could no longer doubt that I had been deceived in my hopes of his having laid aſide his cauſeleſs jealouſy, which affected my ſpirits not a little; and I ſhould have been quite in the horrors, only I was obliged to exert myſelf, being engaged to ſpend the day at Mr. Boyle's, to take leave, as the whole family are going to paſs the Chriſtmas with a ſiſter of his near Belfaſt, and the young ladies will go from that to Dublin with their aunt, to ſtay the remainder of the winter. They will be a material loſs to me while I am here. We paſſed the day ſo agreeably, that my melancholy was inſenſibly

ſenſibly diſpelled, and things appeared in a better light, for I then recollected that Mr. Maunſell's advice and opinion had probably great weight with Charles, and would convince him of the folly of his ſuſpicions, and I had ſome reaſon to think it had; for I have lately been in company at Belle Park with ſome very accompliſhed young men that I was not acquainted with from my infancy, which Charles ſeemed to lay a STRESS on, and he did not appear the leaſt diſconcerted, though one of them paid all his attention to me, and I did not diſcourage it, purely to try how Charles would bear it; it did not alarm him one bit, which I think a very good ſymptom: however, I ſhall ſoon be a better judge of the matter, for he had this morning a letter from Mr. Hamilton, reminding him of his promiſe, and appointing to meet him about twenty miles off, where he will be in two days, on his way home, and inſiſts on Charles going with him. He ſays he will go, and ſent an anſwer to that purpoſe by the ſervant; ſo that he will certainly meet him: but I find, he intends, if poſſible, to prevail on Mr. Hamilton to come and ſpend a few days here before he proceeds on his journey. I wiſh he may

come,

come, as that would put us all out of ſuſpence, though I dread the certainty; for if the worſt ſhould happen, I fear I ſhould but ill ſupport myſelf. However, I will not anticipate misfortunes, as I think I have ſome reaſon to hope it will turn out well.

It is now time to return Mr Maunſell thanks for permitting you to copy the letter for me: I ſhall take care no bad conſequence ſhall attend his kindneſs. I knew Charles and he correſponded, but never thought of mentioning it to you.

As to what you adviſe about Mr. Skeffington's going abroad, I am ſenſible it would be a great advantage to him; I know he wants it more than moſt young men, becauſe he has purſued his ſtudies with ſuch unremitting application, that he really ſecluded himſelf from company and amuſement a great deal more than was proper for his rank in life: but to you I will acknowlege, I cannot bring myſelf to think of it with any degree of fortitude; I cannot even reconcile myſelf to his going to England, though I know he muſt go in Spring; and if the idea of his being abſent two or three months is ſo painful,

what

what would two or three years be? My imagination is ſo fertile in creating trouble, that I ſhould be miſerable from the apprehenſion of dangers, which perhaps, he ſhould never experience. I am really aſhamed of my weakneſs, but cannot conquer it; if we ſhould be ever united, I would have no objection to going with him; for I do not fear dangers to myſelf half ſo much as to thoſe I love.

I ſhall be very happy to find Emily in Dublin when I return, which I hope will be ſoon after Chriſtmas; for indeed the country is very dreary this time of year, and the air much too ſharp for my mother, who begins to complain of the rheumatiſm, as well as for her daughter, whoſe conſtitution, you know, is but delicate.

I am glad Mr. O'Neil is to be in lodgings, that Emily may remain with you, which muſt be more agreeable to her, though I have no doubt of her affection to her parents, yet one would not wiſh to be confined to their particularities, when it would oblige us to give up all the reſt of our friends.

It would give me great pleaſure if your conjecture reſpecting couſin James's attachment to her ſhould prove true; they are worthy of each other; and I do not know where either of them could have a better proſpect of happineſs. I ſhall not hint it to Charles, though I am certain he would not repeat it, if I deſired him not, but I think there is a delicacy in theſe matters, where our female friends are concerned, that makes it improper to talk of them to men.

You deny that you are poſſeſſed of any degree of philoſophy, and yet wiſh yourſelf to be rivalled; now, in my opinion, that is as great a ſtretch of philoſophy as DIOGENES himſelf could boaſt, though ſo renowned for ſelf-denial. But there is ſomething in the affair between you and Mr. Maunſel, that has ever been a myſtery to me; yet as you always ſeemed deſirous to avoid the ſubject, I was unwilling to aſk any queſtions: that he loves you, cannot be doubted; indeed he does not endeavour to conceal it; and thoſe little attentions which you yourſelf allow to be a proof, are very obſervable in him; for

for I think the ſmalleſt minutiæ that can be pleaſing to you, does not eſcape his notice. You cannot have had any quarrel, becauſe the moſt cordial friendſhip ſubſiſts between you; what then can prevent your union? I am at a loſs to gueſs ſince there is no one to controul either of you.

Your wiſhing for a Rival, has drawn me in to aſk queſtions that are impertinent; however, I beg you will not think yourſelf obliged to anſwer them; if it is in the leaſt diſagreeable to you, you have only to paſs over this part of my letter in ſilence, and aſſure yourſelf I will never mention it again.

If Charles and I ſhould ever be married, (which probably a few days will determine) I flatter myſelf our affection will never be exhauſted; though I am not romantic enough to expect it will continue juſt what it is now, but I hope it will ſubſide into a tender and laſting friendſhip, that will end only with our lives: and I think I have great reaſon to hope it will be ſo, as neither of us have the ſmalleſt degree of fickleneſs in our diſpoſition,

elſe it muſt have appeared by this time, which accounts too for our liking having ſubſiſted ſo long; a circumſtance that ſeems to ſurpriſe you; but I cannot ſo eaſily account for our not looking on each other as brother and ſiſter, which might very well have happened from the manner we were brought up together; had that been the caſe, it would have occaſioned no ſmall chagrin to our friends; and if I ſhould find it neceſſary to break with him, I dread the effect it would have on my mother, who loves him as if he was her child, and has no joy equal to the proſpect of ſeeing me his wife; for which reaſon, I have never given her a hint of what has paſſed in regard to Mr. Hamilton, till I ſee how it ends; I wiſh you were with me, for my ſpirits begin to ſink at the apprehenſion of what may happen when he comes, but I will call up all my reſolution, as it is neceſſary to my peace to know for a certainty if Charles be likely to conquer his folly; for indeed I can give it no other name.

Let me hear from you very ſoon: you ſhall know how matters go on here, as ſoon as poſſible.

I long

I long for Chriſtmas to be over, that I may once more enjoy your company; not forgetting Emily and Gertrude.

Dear Louiſa,

ever your's,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER XI.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Nov. 30.—

I REJOICE to find my dear Eliza has cauſe to hope matters will turn out to her ſatisfaction; and I am of opinion from what you tell me, that Charles is giving his reaſon fair play. What a deal of uneaſineſs he would have avoided, had he done ſo before!

I ſhall be very impatient to hear the event of Mr. Hamilton's viſit; if he ſhould come to the caſtle, which I really wiſh he may; becauſe if there is the leaſt ſpark of jealouſy lurking in Charles's boſom, he will not then be able to conceal it ſo well, but the traces of diſcontent will be viſible on his countenance, and you will know to what it is to be attributed.

I ſhould be well pleaſed to be with you for the time, as I ſhould be more at leiſure to make obſervations than you will be, and leſs partial; but I hope you will conſider your

your happineſs is at ſtake, and not be blinded by your tenderneſs; it will be a folly to conceal the truth from me, as you know Harry will hear it, and then I ſhall.

I have a high eſteem for Charles, but love you ſtill better, and cannot conſent to your being his wife till we are quite ſure he has recovered his rationality.

I am ſorry you are loſing the Boyle's; an agreeable neighbour in the country is a very material loſs; but I hope it will determine your mother to come to town as ſoon as ſhe poſſibly can, now you have no companion. I always think of the good any evil may produce, which leſſens the ill greatly, at leaſt makes it more ſupportable.

Mr. and Mrs. O'Neil arrived laſt night, and have brought their little grand-daughter: 'tis a beautiful infant, and as they tell me, the very temper of it's mother; ſhe had left it at home under the care of a relation that lives with her, a genteel, diſcreet woman; but Mr. O'Neil had it at his houſe ſome part of every day, and when he was coming to town could not bear to be ſo long without ſeeing it; ſo

brought

brought the nurſe and little one off. Emily, who did not expect it, was agreeably ſurpriſed; for ſhe had often regretted leaving it, but ſhe meant to return ſo ſoon, and beſides that, was afraid of offending her father, who adores it. We had it here to-day for a while, Emily had it on her knee when Mr. Fitzgerald came in; after paying his compliments, the child attracted his notice; the reſemblance is ſo ſtriking, he knew it was Emily's, and took it in his arms to kiſs it, when the baby, who is but juſt attempting to ſpeak, called him Papa; it ſeems ſhe calls all men ſo, but her mother's confuſion is not to be deſcribed, and it was no way leſſened by his ſaying, he ſhould be happy indeed, if he had a title to that appellation; at the ſame time giving Emily a look infinitely more expreſſive than his words. She was ſtruck intirely dumb; Gertrude had a ſmile full of meaning, and you cannot imagine any ſcene more ridiculous than it was, till I, in compaſſion, ſet them all laughing, by wiſhing the child was mine, that I might have ſuch pretty things ſaid to me; this ſet us talking nonſenſe, and gave her time to recover from the palpitation which his ſpeech had given her; but

I have

I have a ſtrong notion this trifling circumſtance has opened the way for a more ſerious declaration from him, the firſt convenient opportunity: at preſent I am ſure ſhe will not accept him, for the reaſons mentioned already, though I think he need not deſpair of ſucceeding in time; and indeed I join with you in opinion, that ſhe could not have a fairer proſpect of happineſs with any man I know.

Gertrude has a ſmile in one eye, and a tear in the other; ſhe had a letter from her ſwain this day, informing her, he had juſt got his father's permiſſion to take leave of him, and was in conſequence, ſetting off for Paris, where his ſtay would be very ſhort, as they were in daily expectation of embarking, but ſays, he will certainly inform his father of the true ſtate of his heart, before he leaves home, and will let her know the reſult. This is the moſt material part of his letter; the reſt contains only love-like expreſſions of fear for what may happen during his abſence, and ſoldier-like hopes of a ſpeedy return, crowned with laurels.

You

You may gueſs, the account of his father ſending for him, is very pleaſing to her, but the thoughts of his going to America caſts a damp on her ſpirits: ſhe is the picture of an April day, alternate clouds and ſun-ſhine, as each reflection happens to predominate. She begged I would tell you the news, as you were ſo kind to expreſs a deſire to be informed of any circumſtance that occured.

I have not forgot your queſtion about Harry Maunſell, nor do I intend to paſs it over in ſilence; though I confeſs, it is a jubject I have hitherto avoided: but I hope my dear Eliza does not look on my reſerve in that particular, as any breach of the perfect confidence that ſubſiſts between us; for it's the only occurrence of my life in which I have not been quite open, and you muſt conſider, the moſt material circumſtance relating to it, paſſed while you were too young to be my confidant; and ſince that, I thought the leſs was ſaid of it the better; for it has the appearance of vanity to talk of having refuſed a man; and looks too, as if one wiſhed to prevent his marrying another; for certainly, it could not recommend him much to any lady he might addreſs, to know he

he would not think of her, if he could have had me; and till very lately, I had no notion he would be ſo fooliſhly romantic, as to determine on living ſingle, becauſe I cannot marry him. But you muſt know, in that letter, which I believe I had from his ſiſter, before ſhe knew he was coming to town, ſhe mentioned, ſhe had great reaſon to think her ſiſter-in-law, Miſs Herbert, liked Harry; and ſhe had ſome hopes that ſhe was pleaſing to him, as he paid more attention to her, than ever ſhe had ſeen him pay to any woman, except one; and ſince his paſſion for that one was hopeleſs, nothing would be more agreeable to her than a union between him and Miſs Herbert, who was both as to perſon and fortune, a deſirable match for him.

I had another letter from Mrs. Herbert, by Harry, requeſting I would endeavour to diſcover his real ſentiments for her ſiſter, as a circumſtance had happened ſince her laſt, that made her fear he thought not of her in that way ſhe had hoped, and at the ſame time left no doubt of her attachment to him; which was ſo very viſible, ſhe was ſure he muſt have perceived

perceived it, though he would not ſeem to do ſo; which looked as if he did not mean to make any advantage of it. However, ſhe begged I would uſe my influence, which, ſhe ſays, is all-powerful, to prevail on him to think ſeriouſly of it: and even deſired me to inform him of the lady's partiality towards him, which ſhe thought might induce him to make her a return: at all events ſhe ſaid, I muſt inſiſt on his being quite explicit; for if he will not comply with our wiſhes, it will be abſolutely neceſſary to inform Miſs Herbert of the ſtate of Harry's heart, that ſhe may recall her own, before it is too late.

I executed my commiſſion with very bad ſucceſs; for my influence joined to every argument I could employ were inſufficient to perſuade him to return the lady's paſſion, (which he ſaid he had with concern diſcovered, juſt before he left home) and only drew from him a declaration, that as there was an inſuperable bar between him and I, he was determined never to marry. I endeavoured to ſhew him the folly of ſuch a reſolution, but to no purpoſe; and when I found him

him ſo determined, I told him he ſhould then be cautious how he gave any girl room to think ſhe was agreeable to him; and he aſſured me, it was Miſs Herbert's reſemblance to me, both in perſon and manner, that attracted his notice; but he hoped I would acquit him of any deſign to gain her affections, when he knew he could make her no return; he ſhould abhor himſelf if he could be guilty of ſuch a diſhonourable action; indeed I do not ſuſpect him for it; vanity is not amongſt his faults. I wiſh, for his own ſake, he had leſs conſtancy; for I think an old batchelor the moſt forlorn being in the Univerſe, though an old maid may be quite the reverſe; the domeſtic life being natural to women, they can manage their houſe and ſee company as well without a huſband as with one, if not better; and if they diſlike living alone, they cannot fail of a female companion, unleſs their temper is very bad; and in that caſe they could not be happy in marriage.

But all this while you will ſay, you are not a bit the wiſer reſpecting this ſame ſaid myſtery between Harry and me: true,

my dear, nor are you likely, till next poſt, for I am called down to company, and can only add, that I am,

Affectionately your's,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Dec. 1ſt. —

AS I imagine my dear Eliza's curioſity is on full ſtretch for the delightful hiſtory of Henry and Louiſa, I take the firſt leiſure hour to give it you, for I ſuppoſe I ſhould be quite out of favour if I paſſed one poſt, and perhaps I might not have time to-morrow.

I believe you may remember that in old Mr. Maunſell's time the family ſpent every winter in Dublin, and as they were our next door neighbours, there was a great intimacy between him and my father; their example was followed by their children, and Patty Maunſell and I (who were much of an age) were ſcarce ever aſunder. Harry was but a year older than his ſiſter; and as we were all children when our firſt acquaintance commenced, he was uſually with us till he was ſent to a public ſchool, and I recollect when he came to take leave of our family, he could not be forced from

me without the greateſt difficulty; as for me, after ſhedding a few tears I was conſoled for his loſs; ſince Patty was ſtill with me, I did not ſee him for three years after our firſt ſeparation, as the ill health of his mother and mine took both the families to Spa, where, and in France we remained about two years and a half when we returned, and had the misfortune to loſe two of the beſt women in the world in a few months after. My mother died firſt, and I received all the comfort and attention from poor Mrs. Maunſell, that was in her power to give; for tho' ſhe was declining faſt herſelf, ſhe let Patty ſtay entirely with me, till the firſt ſhock was over, and I began to be reconciled to my loſs; ſhe did not long ſurvive, and when ſhe found ſhe could not live many days, ſhe deſired to ſee her ſon, who was accordingly ſent for; when he arrived I was returning the melancholy compliment to Patty, aſſiſting in her attendance on her mother, and endeavouring to comfort her for the loſs ſhe was going to ſuſtain: my father being out of town on buſineſs, I could dedicate all my time to this friendly office; and indeed I never left her for a day, till his return, which was not for a month after Mrs. Maunſell's death. During that time, the childiſh

childiſh affection which Harry expreſſed for me, before he went to ſchool, ſeemed to be ripened into a more ſerious attachment: he did not in plain terms tell me ſo, but ſome body has ſaid actions have a language, and his were ſo eloquent as not to be miſtaken; I did not however ſeem to perceive it, tho' I acknowledge I was far from being indifferent about him: you who know him will not be ſuſpriſed at that, eſpecially when I tell you, that joined to a mind as faultleſs as human nature could admit, he then, notwithſtanding his youth, poſſeſſed all thoſe manly graces of perſon for which you have ſo often admired him; add to that, we had parted children, and now met, when both our perſons and manners were ſtrikingly improved, and we at an age when the heart is but too open to ſoft impreſſions; and being in the ſame houſe for a month we made a greater progreſs in each other's eſteem, than if we had met on temporary viſits for a twelve-month.

Soon after I went home Harry entered the college, and while he was in it, his attendance on his duties, (in which he was very aſſiduous) kept the family longer

in town every ſummer than was uſual, by which means he had ſuch conſtant opportunities of ſeeing me, that his paſſion never had time to cool, which probably it would have done, had we been ſeparated juſt when it was beginning; unfortunately for him, that did not happen till he was going to travel in three years after, and by that time his love was proof againſt abſence; yet he had ſo much prudence as never to make any declaration, or attempt to draw me into any engagement that might have involved us in difficulties; but before he ſet out, Patty took an opportunity of lamenting to me, that her brother was never likely to be ſettled to his mind during their father's life; for tho' the allowance he gave him, was ample for a ſingle man, it would not ſupport a wife, as the woman he would wiſh to marry ought to be ſupported, nor could he think of offering himſelf to any one, while he was unable to make ſuch a ſettlement as ſhe had a right to expect; and his father had given him to underſtand he had done all he could afford to do, without ſtinting himſelf, which he would not do, nor would Harry permit him if he was inclined; for you know, Louiſa, continued ſhe, my father was always uſed to profuſion, and is not at a time of life to be debarred

of

of what he has been accuſtomed to; it is much fitter Harry ſhould ſuffer for a time, tho' I am ſure it is no ſmall mortification to him.

I was very ſenſible this diſcourſe was intended as an apology to me for his ſilence on a ſubject, which his behaviour gave me all the reaſon in the world to expect he would come to an explanation about, before he went abroad. I took no other notice of it however, than to join in opinion with her, that their father ought not to be put to any inconvenience; tho' I dare ſay my looks betrayed a conſciouſneſs of the intention of her ſpeech, or at leaſt, my not aſking who the lady was, might convince her I gueſſed her meaning, and did not chuſe to have it farther explained, which was the real truth.

Harry left us ſoon after, and as we were always on the moſt friendly footing, I did not heſitate to expreſs a moderate concern at loſing him for ſo long a time; he endeavoured in vain to reſtrain his paſſion within the bounds he had hitherto preſcribed to it; the idea of parting was too ſtrong for his prudence, and he took ſuch a tender farewel as convinced me of the ſentiments he

he entertained for me, more than a thouſand vows and proteſtations would have done.

He wrote regularly to his ſiſter, who always ſhewed me his letters while ſhe was in town, and when ſhe left it uſed to ſend them to me, by his deſire, no doubt, as he knew I would be entertained with his account of of the countries thro' which he paſſed; and beſide that, I was always mentioned in a manner that would have been pleaſing, even tho' my heart was quite unconcerned.

He had been about a year away, when I made a conſiderable conqueſt one evening at a drum; a gentleman, that ſhall be nameleſs, (becauſe I don't think it genteel to ſpeak of thoſe we have refuſed) ſtood at the back of my chair while I loſt two or three rubbers, and perceiving it did not ruffle my temper, wiſely concluded I would make a moſt deſirable wife, and paid a viſit to my father with whom he had a ſlight acquaintance, and without farther ceremony made his propoſals in form, not doubting my acceptance of an offer ſo advantageous, added to the powerful inducement of a title, and a very ancient family,

(the

(the latter joined to ſettlements that were far above my expectations) had great weight with my father, who being deſcended from the oldeſt families in England, held a long pedigree in great veneration; but tho' I too have all due reſpect for thoſe things, I thought ſomething more was needful, and could not marry any man for the merit of his anceſtors; and I could ſee no one agreeable quality in himſelf: beſide that from what I had heard of his diſpoſition, I thought it probable he might put his wife's temper to trials more ſevere than that of loſing at cards, and tho' my patience held out againſt bad fortune, I could not anſwer for its being ſo complaiſant to a bad huſband; then his applying to my father, without firſt endeavouring to gain my approbation, diſguſted me exceedingly, as it ſhewed he muſt either think my good opinion of very little conſequence, or elſe he muſt have a large ſhare of ſelf-ſufficiency, that made him take it for granted I could not refuſe him: take it any way, there was ſo little delicacy in it, and ſo much the appearance of thinking he conferred a favour, that it was a pleaſure to me to mortify his pride by rejecting him, which I did when he came in full confidence of being joyfully accepted, as I could

could ſee from the aſtoniſhment viſible in his countenance, and which indeed was ſo great that he had not power to ſpeak; ſo when I finiſhed my ſpeech, which was very laconic, I made my curtſy and withdrew, leaving my father to reconcile him to his diſappointment.

What paſſed between them after I was gone I cannot ſay, but my father informed me that evening, his lordſhip had begged his permiſſion to continue his viſits, in hopes a little attention on his ſide might remove my objections, as he feared he had been too haſty, for it was uſual for young ladies to expect to be ſolicited ſome time before they were required to give an anſwer. And I hope, ſir, ſaid I (with quickneſs) you did not encourage him: and why not child was his anſwer; ſuch offers are not to be met with every day, and deſerve at leaſt to be conſidered before they are refuſed.

If that be all, ſir, ſaid I, he has nothing to hope from giving me time to conſider, for I diſlike the man, and never can bring myſelf to marry him: rather ſay, Louiſa, ſaid my father, you like another man, and are meanly waiting till he thinks proper to aſk

ſk you. This unexpected attack con-ſounded me a good deal, but as it really was not the cauſe of my preſent refuſal, I ſoon recovered myſelf, and aſked him who he ſuſpected of having ſuch influence over me.

He inſtantly replied, I believe your own heart will tell you, it is Harry Maunſell I mean; he is a young man I have a high eſteem for, and if he has any thoughts of you, and had made a proper declaration of it before he went abroad, I ſhould have no objection; but as it is, if he was a prince, and you can be ſo abject as to wait his pleaſure—you are no daughter of mine.

This unuſual ſeverity of ſpeech from a father who had been always ſo indulgent, threw me into tears, which inſtantly ſoft-ened him, and taking my hand, my dear; ſaid he, I did not mean to diſtreſs you, but I cannot bear with patience that any man ſhould think he may have you, at any time he finds himſelf at leiſure to aſk.

Convince me Harry is not the cauſe of your refuſing his lordſhip's offer, and tho' I greatly approve it, I will immediately free you from his addreſſes: I aſſured him I could

with

with great truth aver, he was not the cauſe, for my diſlike proceeded from circumſtances I had heard, and obſervations I had made of his lordſhip's diſpoſition, which was really true, as I had often met him at the ſame houſe before that unlucky night when he took a fancy to me, but to put the matter out of all doubt, I gave a ſolemn promiſe never to marry Harrry Maunſell.

My father ſeemed much pleaſed with me, reſumed his wonted good humour, and I heard no more of my noble admirer, except that the lady of the houſe where I ſaw him, told me, it was with great difficulty he could be perſuaded to reſign his hopes of gaining me.

What a long winded tale is here!—I am ſo tired of it that I muſt defer the remainder to another opportunity. You have brought me into ſuch a way of telling long ſtories to amuſe you, that I ſhall begin to think myſelf an old maid, the ſymptom is ſo ſtrong; and tho' it is a character I have a great reſpect for, and mean to ſhine in one time or other, I would not chuſe to be one before my time.

I am

I am now going to revive my ſpirits by a little party at Cards, ſo farewell till to-morrow.

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER XII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Dec. 2.—

I GREATLY long to hear from my dear Eliza, as I expect your next will contain a full and true account of the effect Mr. Hamilton's viſit, (that is ſuppoſing he came to the caſtle) had on Charles; and I dare ſay, before this reaches you, you will be quite as impatient for the continuation of my romance. I cannot deny but I felt ſome regret, when firſt I reflected on the reſtrictions I had laid myſelf under, but it proceeded chiefly from the pain I thought it would give Harry, when he ſhould be informed of it; however, the pleaſure I enjoyed in being freed from the ſolicitations of a man I diſliked, ſoon reconciled me to it, but I wiſhed much for an opportunity of telling Patty what had happened, that ſhe might hint it to her brother, yet I could not think of writing it to her, as ſhe had never ſpoke to me in plain terms on the ſubject, ſo I determined to let it lye till

ſhe

ſhe came to town, when I thought it likely I might find means of introducing it; but in that I was diſappointed; for before their uſual time of leaving the country ſhe was married to Mr. Herbert, which detained them ſome time, and juſt when they intended coming up, her father was ſeized with that illneſs which occaſioned his death, after confining him to his room the whole winter, during which time Patty never quitted his Houſe; and when he was gone her huſband took her home, the ſeaſon being then ſo far advanced, it was not worth the trouble of coming to town, for the ſhort time they could have ſtaid.

Mr. Maunſell's death haſtened Harry's return, who arrived at Cork in May, which was about three months after, but his father having left his affairs in rather an unſettled ſtate, owing to indolence in attending to his agents accounts, that buſineſs detained him in the country till winter; by which means I had time enough to be prepared for an interview, which I believe would have affected me a good deal had it happened a few months ſooner, but by this time I was perfectly ſatis-

fied with what I had done. I was however a little fluttered when I ſaw his carriage ſtop at his own houſe, where he did not remain ten minutes before he paid me a viſit, and though my father's preſence a little reſtrained his tongue, his eyes plainly told me what he wiſhed to ſay; company coming in he ſtaid only till tea was over, as he ſaw it would be impoſſible to ſpeak to me that evening, but next morning he came in, at an hour he knew my father would be out, and after many tender profeſſions of joy at ſeeing me, offered himſelf and fortune to my acceptance, and begged my permiſſion to make ſuch propoſals to my father, as he hoped would meet his approbation.

I hardly knew how to go about telling him a circumſtance, that would at once daſh all the hopes of happineſs with which he had been ſo long flattering himſelf; but it muſt be done, and I accompliſhed it in the beſt manner I was able: it is utterly impoſſible for me to give you an indea of the agitation that appeared in his countenance while I ſpoke; I felt for his diſappointment, and uſed every argument in my power to ſoften the ſeverity of it; but he

was

was for a time abſolutely incapable of liſtening to reaſon. He execrated the man whoſe offers had been the occaſion of my making ſuch a promiſe, and curſed the family pride that had inſtigated my father to require it; in ſhort, he ſaid a thouſand extravagant things, and railed himſelf out of breath before I could bring him to any degree of compoſure; at laſt I convinced him that as his behaviour to me had been always ſo particular that every one obſerved it, my father had great reaſon to think I I was ill treated when he went abroad without explaining his ſentiments, and of courſe it was natural for him to reſent it, as it muſt hurt him much to have it ſuppoſed I was waiting any man's pleaſure.

All his anger was then turned on himſelf, for not declaring both his paſſion and his ſituation in pecuniary matters, before he left Ireland; but he determined to clear it up to my father that he might be reinſtated in his good opinion, though it could anſwer no other purpoſe, as the promiſe I made was ſolemn and unconditional, therefore could not be revoked.

I ſaid all I could to perſuade him to look out for ſome other woman, capable of

making him happy, which would be the beſt method of blotting me from his mind, except as a friend, in which light I ſhould ever eſteem him; but my arguments had no effect, and though I thought a little time would change his romantic notions, I find he is now as determined as ever. When my father was acquainted with the nature of his ſilence, he expreſſed much concern at the obſtacle that was between us, and ſaid, if it would ſatisfy my ſcruples, he would willingly free me, as far as in him lay, but as I had ſhewed no reluctance in making the promiſe, he believed I could not eaſily be brought to think he could releaſe me from it; but that Harry did not tell me, till I had given a final anſwer; which was, I did not think any power on earth could diſpenſe with a ſolemn vow, unleſs it was taken by compulſion, and that was not the caſe with me. I therefore intreated Harry never to mention the affair again, and by that means he might bring himſelf to forget it. As to the firſt part, he ſaid he ſhould certainly obey me, but the latter he knew was impoſſible; it was too deeply engraven on his heart. I have often ſince, at his ſiſter's requeſt, preſſed him to think of marrying,

marrying, but thoug'i deprived of all glimmering of hope, his attachment ſeems ſtronger every time we meet; and you know we are very much aſunder: but he really may ſing, "His paſſion's conſtant as the ſun."——For me, I acknowlege, I have the moſt perfect friendſhip for him; and find it very flattering to be the ſole object of attention, to a moſt amiable young man, whoſe love, I am ſure, muſt be of the pureſt kind, ſince he can have no intereſt to gratify, nor the leaſt expectation of gratifying his paſſion. I do not, however, at all, regret being debarred from marrying him; had I thought it a ſtate capable of making me happier than I am, I ſhould not have carried the Romance ſo far as to refuſe ſome other young men, that you know addreſſed me, and who certainly had merit ſufficient both to gain my heart, and keep it; I never had a high idea of matrimonial felicity: and I am ſorry to ſay, the obſervations I have made amongſt my married acquaintance has not altered my opinion. My notions of happineſs, may, perhaps, be ſingular, and I do not wiſh to make converts to it; if many thought as I do, it would be of the worſt conſequence; there would be an

end

end of all the tender relationſhips that bind mankind to each other, and the world would be one continued ſcene of diſcord and confuſion: the inſtituion is certainly good and capable of making us happy; but human nature is ſo perverſe that we have ingeniouſly contrived to fruſtrate the beneficent intentions of heaven in that, as well as other things, and turned to our miſery what was meant to promote our happineſs, it is not however neceſſary that every one ſhould marry, and I really believe Providence deſigned me for a ſingle life, as it always appeared to me the moſt elegible, and, I am convinced, is moſt ſuited to my diſpoſition; if every one conſidered their own temper, there would probably be fewer unhappy matches than we now ſee, but that is what we ſhall never perſuade the generality of people to think neceſſary; ſo we muſt even let them go on, kiſſing one moment, and quarrelling the next, to the end of the chapter; and I have ſeen violent advocates for wedlock paſs their whole life that way; but I ſuppoſe they thought it happineſs, or they would not have ſo ſtrongly recommended the ſtate to others.

That

That my dear Eliza may enjoy more felicity in it, than has yet been the portion of any one I have met with, is the ſincere wiſh of her

Affectionate,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Dec. 5.—

I DELAYED writing to my Louiſa theſe many days, for two reaſons: firſt, till I had the whole of your intereſting narative: ſecond, till Mr. Hamilton was gone, and I ſhould be able to tell you, how we went on here.

Charles met him at the place appointed, and eaſily prevailed on him to paſs a few days here, before he ſet out for home; he did not leave us till this morning, when Charles accompanied him according to promiſe, and is not to return this fortnight. You cannot imagine how ſolitary I ſeem without him: but to the material point, which I am ſure will give you great pleaſure.

He never ſhewed the leaſt ſympton of jealouſy or uneaſineſs, the whole time Mr. Hamilton was here, though I could perceive, he ſcrutinouſly obſerved every look and

and word that paſſed between him and me, and I was well pleaſed he did, as it muſt tend to cure him of his ſuſpicions, as far as they related to me; and Mr. Hamilton, I ſaw, avoided addreſſing himſelf ſo particularly to me, when Charles was preſent, as he would do at other times; no doubt, for fear of giving him pain; for he had heard, ſince firſt we met, how matters were circumſtanced between us, and I dare ſay, gueſſed at Charles's foible from his behaviour at the Inn; elſe why that caution? for his addreſs to me at all times, was only what might be expected from a man of politeneſs; though he had told me, he had heard of the intention of our family, with regard to Mr. Skeffington and me, juſt in time to recall his heart: I believe I looked rather ſimple; but I choſe to take that opportunity of acknowleging my attachment, and anſwered, it was true, our parents had always intended us for each other, and happily for me, Mr. Skeffington's amiable qualities, made my duty and inclination go hand in hand. He paid me ſome genteel compliments on what he called my ingenuouſneſs, and ſaid, Mr. Skeffington was, indeed, a happy man in meeting with a lady ſo far above the little punctilios

punctilios of the Sex, as not to be aſhamed to acknowlege the impreſſion his merit had made on her heart. It was a compliment, however, that I did not deſerve, for I felt very much aſhamed at making the acknowledgment, and certainly would not have done it, but that I had reaſon to think he had ſome little liking for me; and if I was ſilent he might take it for encouragement; for though I never ſaw any thing like vanity in him; and there is few men ignorant of their own perfections, and I dare ſay, he is ſenſible that both as to perſon and accompliſhments, he is ſuch as might gain any woman's favour, who had no pre-engagement.

I told you I dreaded his coming here, though I wiſhed it; but I had a thouſand fears, leſt Charles ſhould be unable to command his temper, and therefore expoſe himſelf, and throw me into a very diſagreeable ſituation; but as it happened, my fears were needleſs; he behaved very well, and we were all eaſy and chearful. Part of the time we had ſome other company, yet I wanted the Boyle's very much; they went to Belfaſt a day or two before I wrote laſt, and I cannot repair my loſs while I am here; but my mother will go

to

to town as ſoon as poſſible after Chriſtmas.

I am now to thank you for giving up ſo much of your time to my amuſement; and indeed your little Story affords both entertainment and inſtruction, in the manner you tell it; but how few could follow your example! in ſo intirely ſubjecting their paſſion to their reaſon, as not even to repine at obeying your father, though we may eaſily gueſs it muſt have affected you much at the time: your good ſenſe enabled you to bear a diſappointment that moſt girls, at the age you then were, would have thought inſupportable, the object conſidered: for certainly, Harry Maunſell's merit would be a powerful excuſe for refuſing to abjure all hopes of being united to him, when one knew it was a generous motive prevented him from explaining his ſentiments. I cannot help thinking you have an uncommon ſhare of Philoſophy, though you will not allow me to ſay ſo; but as it is poſſible Harry has not ſo much, I pity him exceedingly: his reſolution to remain ſingle, is a convincing proof of the ſtrength of his affection. I muſt, at the ſame time, acknowlege, it favours more

of the Romantic than I ſhould have ſuſpected him, or any other young man of this age for.

Whenever I hear the Platonic ſyſtem diſputed, I hope you will give me leave to produce you and your Swain, as a proof in favour of the Doctrine.

Your opinion has ſuch weight with me, that I am heartily ſorry it is ſo unfavourable to matrimony; for I know you conſider a ſubject moſt deliberately before you form a judgment: and I am ſatisfied you would not determine againſt the ſtate, if you did not think there was a ſmall chance of happineſs in it. I never could form the leaſt idea how Mr. Maunſell and you were circumſtanced, nor could I gueſs why you did not marry him: I plainly ſaw he was paſſionately fond of you; and to tell truth, I thought you had no diſlike to him; therefore, could by no means gueſs at the cauſe of delay, when you had both been ſo long at your own diſpoſal. Will you give me leave to blame your father? however indulgent in other reſpects, he was, ſurely, too ſevere in exacting ſuch a promiſe from you, as the only terms on which

which he would free you from the addreſſes of a man you aſſured him you could not like, if you had never ſeen Harry. I think he might have depended on you for not doing any thing beneath the family you ſprung from; for though you are not haughty, you have that proper degree of pride, which would prevent your bearing an indignity; therefore, he might be ſure you would not accept of Harry or any other man, whoſe behaviour, when explained, would not meet the approbation of your friends.

Do not you think Patty was too cloſe, when ſhe told you, her brother could not marry while his father lived? and the reaſon of it, had ſhe ſaid plainly, you were the perſon who poſſeſſed his heart; it would have prevented the diſagreeable conſequence that enſued, becauſe you could then have told your father, but in the manner ſhe ſpoke, it would really have looked very vain to take it to yourſelf.

I am ſo ſorry for Mr. Maunſell, that I am diſpoſed to find fault with every one who was any way the cauſe of his diſappointment.

I made a thouſand reflections as I read, but will not, at preſent, trouble you with any more of them, except, that I cannot imagine how you kept it ſuch a ſecret; for though I have heard many expreſs their ſurpriſe that you did not marry him, I never yet heard a reaſon why you did not; and in general, thoſe ſort of affairs are very ſoon whiſpered about.

I am much pleaſed with what you mention of couſin James and Emily; he could not bring any one into the family that would be more agreeable to all his relations; I anſwer for them all, becauſe I have heard it wiſhed for amongſt the old folks who knew her.

I ſympathiſe with Gertrude, both in her joy and ſorrow; I judge what ſhe muſt feel at the idea of the Count going abroad, from what I ſhould feel myſelf; but I hope ſhe has more fortitude than I ſhould have on ſuch an occaſion, elſe ſhe muſt be very unhappy.

I am quite obliged to her for deſiring you to tell me what occurred, and beg you will never forget to inform me when ſhe hears

hears from him, as I am really intereſted in the event on her account; ſure his father cannot have any objection to the choice he has made.

If Charles ſhould write to Mr. Maunſell, no doubt you will ſee the letter, and I believe I need not requeſt you will let me know the contents, or procure me a ſight of it, for I dare ſay, you would not wiſh to conceal any thing that is material to know.

Adieu, dear Louiſa: believe me,

Affectionately your's,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER XV.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Dec. 12.—

A CONTINUAL round of company at home, and viſiting abroad, this week paſt, prevented me from acknowledging my dear Eliza's laſt favour, which I was ſorry for, as I ſuppoſe you are rather in the diſmals on account of Charles being away; but I hope you have too much ſenſe to let ſuch a trifle depreſs your ſpirits very much.

I am heartily glad Mr. Hamilton's viſit paſſed off ſo well, eſpecially as he really does admire you: you ſee how quick-ſighted jealouſy is, for Charles perceived the impreſſion you had made on him immediately, as he mentions, in his letter to Harry; if he writes on this occaſion, I ſhall certainly inform you; but by what you ſay of his behaviour, I have great hopes he has recovered his reaſon; for I think he could hardly have diſſembled his uneaſineſs during ſo many days.

I am

I am happy in having amuſed you with my little ſtory; as to the inſtruction I cannot ſay much about it; for was it public, probably more would condemn than approve my conduct: at leaſt I am ſure I ſhould be held in abhorrence by all thoſe who think LOVE an excuſe for every act of imprudence or diſobedience, they can be guilty of: but I do not take ſuch merit to myſelf as you are willing to allow me, for not repining at what is paſt; I have no claim to your praiſes on that head, becauſe the ſingle ſtate is really moſt ſuitable to my inclinations, yet notwithſtanding it is more than probable if I had not made that promiſe, Mr. Maunſell might have prevailed on me to marry, againſt the conviction of my reaſon; but as that is now impoſſible, no other man is likely to have ſufficient influence over my heart, to make me do any thing contrary to my judgment; ſo that inſtead of repining, I rather think I have cauſe to rejoice, that I have a certainty of paſſing my life in the ſtate moſt pleaſing to me. But you may, perhaps, think, it requires all the philoſophy you talk of, to enable me to ſupport the reproachful appellation of an Old Maid; it might be ſo formerly, but do not you remember,

member, my dear, that Mr. Twiſs has kindly reſcued us in this kingdom from undeſerved contempt, by allowing the old maids of Ireland to be perfectly pleaſing and agreeable; and ſince he acknowledges it, I think I have nothing to dread; for you know he allowed no perfection either in the country or the people, that he could poſſibly detract from. I doubt the Platonic ſyſtem would not gain much by producing Harry as proof of it's exiſtence; for I fear his paſſion is not ſo perfectly refined as that requires, though I grant you it is more romantic than what we uſually meet with, indeed more ſo than is for his peace, becauſe he certainly did not wiſh to live ſingle, and has determined to do ſo, merely in conſequence of his diſappointment; it is a reſolution I by no means approve, as I think he will be apt to repent it, or at leaſt have cauſe to do ſo, when youthful paſſion has ſubſided, and he finds himſelf a ſolitary being in his own houſe, without any companion, and depending on the care of ſervants: if ill health ſhould be the attendant on old age, as uſually is, my arguments will then have all their weight in his mind, and he will be ſorry he would not ſuffer himſelf to be convinced by them before it was too late.

You

You are ſo abſorbed in compaſſion for him, that you do not take the leaſt notice of poor Miſs Herbert, whoſe hapleſs love I expected would have a large ſhare of your pity.

I wrote Patty an account of my unſucceſsful pleading in behalf of her ſiſter-in-law; and as I was convinced it would be in vain to hope for any alteration in Harry's ſentiments, I adviſed her to take the firſt opportunity of letting the lady know the whole of the affair between him and me, and his determination to remain unmarried, that ſhe may withdraw her affections before they are ſo ſtrongly fixed as to make the effort painful.

I have had an anſwer, wherein ſhe tells me, ſhe had let Miſs Herbert into the ſecret of Harry's attachment to me, the day after ſhe received my letter, ſome diſcourſe happening between them which introduced it very a-pro-pos; ſhe ſays, ſhe liſtened very attentively while ſhe ſpoke; her colour frequently changing, and now and then interrupted her with tender expreſſions of pity for his diſappointment;

at

at the concluſion ſhe ſighed heavily, and ſaid, ſhe wondered how any woman could diſlike Mr. Maunſell, to whom he endeavoured to render himſelf agreeable; but when ſhe heard it was quite otherwiſe, Patty ſays, her aſtoniſhment is not to be deſcribed: ſhe could not conceive it poſſible, that any conſideration even of duty, ſhould have force to prevail on a woman that loved Mr. Maunſell, to give him up for ever.

Oh! madam, ſaid ſhe, had Miſs Mortimer qualified the promiſe ſo as to leave it in her father's power to releaſe her, they might have been happy; but now they muſt ſurely be wretched. Patty ſaid, indeed, ſhe knew no body happier; for my paſſions were ſo intirely under the government of reaſon, that I never ſuffered them to interrupt my peace. The tears ſtood in the poor girl's eyes, and ſhe only ſaid, ſuch fortitude ſeldom fell to the ſhare of our ſex.

She was very ill the remainder of that day and the next, but when Patty wrote, was much better, and tried to be chearful, though it was plain it did not come from

from her heart: however, as ſhe has very good ſenſe, no doubt ſhe will ſee the neceſſity of overcoming an attachment, that promiſes her nothing but uneaſineſs.

I am exceedingly ſorry Harry could not, or would not, return this young lady's regard, as from the character I hear of her temper and diſpoſition, I am ſure they would have been happy. He himſelf ſays, ſhe is deſerving any man's affection, who had a heart to give.

If you muſt praiſe my heroiſm, let it be in wiſhing and endeavouring to perſuade him to marry; for that I confeſs, is a great degree of ſelf-denial, ſince it would of neceſſity put an end to that agreeable intercourſe, which at preſent contributes to my happineſs: for the friendſhip I entertain for him, is the ſofteſt, moſt pleaſing ſentiment, that can poſſibly be imagined; and the reſerve that muſt take place (if he was married) of the delightful confidence that now ſubſiſts between us, would leave a vacuum in my heart, that would ever remain; yet as his welfare is of infinitely more weight with me, than any gratification of my own; I have

ſincerely

ſincerely wiſhed to ſee him cured of his unfortunate attachment: but here he is, and I muſt lay down my pen.——

Writing to Miſs Fitzgerald, ſaid he; yes. Then I have ſomething for your peruſal, which, perhaps, you would chuſe to mention to her; and put into my hand a ſhort letter from Charles, which he permits me to encloſe, and which I ſhall leave you to read. So farewel, dear Eliza, ſays,

Your affectionate friend,

LOUISA MORTIMER

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

DEAR MAUNSELL,

Hamilton-Hall, Dec. 11.—

YOU will ſee by the date of this, what good effect your advice had on me; ſince I am now in the houſe of a man, whom I could ſcarce bear the ſight of when I wrote to you laſt, but the force of your arguments opened my eyes, and reſtored me in ſome degree to myſelf, at leaſt ſo far as to enable me to conſider the matter more diſpaſſionately than I had yet done; and the reſult was, that I would purſue your plan, and, if poſſible, get Mr. Hamilton to the caſtle, and obſerve both his and Eliza's behaviour when together, by which means I could judge what foundation I had for my doubts, and alſo know if they were likely to be removed.

He reminded me by a polite letter of my promiſe to ſpend ſome time at his houſe before Chriſtmas, and appointed me to meet him at a place he mentioned, to ac-

company him home; I went and eaſily prevailed on him to paſs a few days with me before we ſet out for Derry; accordingly we came directly to the caſtle, where he continued till the 6th when I accompanied him to this place, which is perhaps one of the moſt beautifully improved ſpots in the univerſe, and during his abſence has been kept by his mother in the ſame elegant order it was left by her huſband.

But to return to my ſubject; by all the obſervations I could make while Mr. Hamilton was with me, I am ſtill of opinion he admires Eliza; but as he heard after our firſt meeting how we were circumſtanced, I am ſure I have nothing to fear from him, unleſs he received encouragement from her behaviour, which I could not ſee the leaſt reaſon to apprehend, ſo that I find myſelf at preſent very eaſy.

However, keeping your advice ſtill in mind, I do not not intend to mention haſtening our marriage, till after my return from England, where buſineſs will call me in five or ſix weeks at fartheſt, but I do not know exactly how long I ſhall ſtay there; I ſuppoſe a few months will do

to

to put matters on a proper footing, which are very indifferently managed by the preſent agent; and I think if I find Eliza entertains the ſame ſentiments for me when I return, that ſhe has always ſeemed to do, I ſhall be cured of thoſe jealouſies that have of late interrupted my peace, and will then preſs her to compleat my happineſs, which will be very imperfect till I am certain I poſſeſs both her heart and hand.

I could not anſwer your laſt ſooner, becauſe I was quite undetermined how to act, (though in mine I had promiſed to do as you adviſed) till the opportunity of getting Mr. Hamilton to the caſtle ſo much ſooner than I expected, determined me to follow your opinion, which I inclined to all a long, but I feared it would be a length of time before I could ſee them together, and I could not bear the ſuſpence I was in long, for it was a ſtate, I am convinced, infinitely worſe than Popiſh purgatory. Jealouſy is the worſt of fiends: Why is it an attendant on ſo ſweet a paſſion as love? But you Maunſell are free from it, and yet I know you are a lover! It muſt then be a weakneſs in the mind, and if I cannot conquer it I ſhall be wretched; but I hope

your aſſiſting council, joined to my own efforts, will effect a cure.

Mr. Hamilton calls on me to go with him a few miles on a viſit.

Adieu, Dear Maunſell,

Your's,

C. SKEFFINGTON.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Dec. 15.—

My dear Louiſa,

I HAD the pleaſure of your's, with the incloſures, and am much obliged both to you and Mr. Maunſell for giving me the peruſal of it: I ſhall return it with this. I cannot but ſay I had better hopes of Charles before I ſaw it than I have now, for you may obſerve he ſeems doubtful himſelf, that he ſhall be able to conquer his weakneſs, (as he calls it) from which I infer, he ſtill finds it more powerful than he acknowleges, but as he wiſhes to be cured, I have hopes he will accompliſh it; and if it depends on his finding me in the ſame ſentiments on his return from England, I think I may anſwer for it.

I now ſee the folly of parents endeavouring to attach children to each other, before they know what their diſpoſitions

will be, for when the affections are ſtrongly engaged it is not eaſy to withdraw them; though our reaſon may tell us we were not formed to make each other happy; at leaſt I find it ſo, and fear I have a great deal of uneaſineſs before me. You I know would find no difficulty in doing what your reaſon dictated; but as Miſs Herbert obſerves, ſuch fortitude is not common in women; and I think I have even leſs of it than others.

That letter has quite depreſſed my ſpirits, which were not very good ſince Charles left us, and to make them worſe my mother has been ill theſe two days; if ſhe continues ſo, I ſhall be frighted to death: I wiſh we were ſafe in Dublin, there I ſhould have the comfort of your ſociety, which would enable me to bear any affliction better than I can do, when unſupported by your friendly council.

Though my regard for you and Harry took up all my thoughts when I wrote laſt, yet I aſſure you Miſs Herbert was not without my pity; but as her liking was but of a ſhort ſtanding, I ſhould ſuppoſe the diſappointment cannot very greatly affect her

her for any time, though at firſt ſhe may feel it ſeverely, as ſhe imagined him diſengaged, and had no reaſon from his behaviour to expect any obſtacle; however a beginning inclination may ſoon be conquered.

I do indeed, Louiſa, allow you great praiſe for your whole conduct; particularly your endeavours to perſuade him to marry; ſince that is what your heart is moſt repugnant to, and I own I cannot help being pleaſed at his determination, though I aſſent to your opinion in regard to old batchelors; but I think he muſt be happier even in that ſtate, than married to one woman while he paſſionately loves another, and as that is the caſe, it would be a pity to take from your happineſs without adding to his; for certainly in your preſent ſituation you enjoy more real ſatisfaction than any one I ever met with, and I begin to think you have choſen the right road to content; for that muſt be the ſureſt way that does not depend on the caprice of another.——Why have not I reſolution enough to make the ſame choice? and put an end at once to all the anxieties I have ſuffered, ſince I came to the knowlege of Mr.

Mr. Sſkeffington's temper; but your good ſenſe enables you to correct that too great ſenſibility, which is the thing will ever prevent me from that happy repoſe, (if I may uſe the expreſſion) that you continually enjoy. That you, my dear girl, may long continue to enjoy it, is the fervent wiſh of

Your Affectionate,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

I have juſt got a letter from Charles, wherein he ſays he will be home the 20th at fartheſt: he writes in the moſt tender manner, and expreſſes great impatience to ſee me.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Dec. 18.—

I AM ſorry to find my dear Eliza's ſpirits are ſo very low, and requeſt you will not give way to that encroaching diſorder, which if not ſtruggled againſt in time, creeps on imperceptibly, and gains ſuch an aſcendant over us that we will not endeavour to conquer it. I often cautioned you againſt encouraging that ſenſibility, which you allow interrupts your happineſs, becauſe I foreſaw it would do ſo, and I know if you could make the trial, you might correct it as well as me; it is not the want of ſenſe, but reſolution prevents you; you had always a propenſity to indulge melancholy ideas: for my part, I own I do not wiſh for ſuch exquiſite ſenſibility as ſhould make me wretched; for as ſome of our female poets, (I do not remember who) expreſſes it,

" Nor eaſe nor peace the heart can know,
That like the needle true,

Turns

Turns at the touch of joy, or woe,
But turning, trembles too."

Yet do not imagine I wiſh to ſtand unmoved at the joys or griefs of myſelf or fellow creatures; far from it,—but then I would chuſe to feel them as a chriſtian out; I would not be beyond meaſure elated with one, nor diſtreſſed by the other: I would moderate my own afflictions by patient ſubmiſſion, and firm reliance on Providence, and I would endeavour to mitigate thoſe of others, by affording either aſſiſtance or conſolation as the caſe required, or my abilities extended; though tenderneſs of heart is certainly very amiable in a woman, it requires a proper degree of reſolution, to prevent its degenerating into weakneſs, which it is but too apt to do; fortitude is as becoming in a woman as a man, and quite as neceſſary; for how very unfit muſt that woman be to offer conſolation to her huſband, her family, or friends in affliction, that ſuffers herſelf to ſink under the moſt trifling diſappointment; beſides it betrays ſuch a diſtruſt in Providence, to depend on every untoward accident of life, as renders us very unworthy of any aſſiſtance from him, whom we are taught to hope will extricate

tricate us from our difficulties, provided we put a proper confidence in him, and endeavour to deſerve his protection. Excuſe me, my dear girl, for preaching to you, but I feel myſelf ſo intereſted in your happineſs, that I cannot be ſilent when I ſee you likely to loſe it, merely for want of a little exertion of that underſtanding with which heaven has liberally endowed you.

Your mother is not, I dare ſay, in any alarming way; and for what relates to Charles, I do not think his letter need effect your ſpirits ſo much; for though I grant he is not yet perfectly cured, we may well hope he will, ſince he ſeems determined to uſe his own efforts for the purpoſe; but I have a great notion his abſence, more than any thing elſe, occaſions your melancholy; at leaſt I hope ſo, for then his return will ſet all matters to rights. Do pray get out of your lachrymals before you write again; for I fear a few ſuch letters as your laſt would infect me.—True, Harry is certainly better as he is, if he cannot conquer his paſſion; but what I contend for is, he might conquer it if he would try, for I believe paſſion of any kind may be ſubdued if we chuſe to do it.

I will

I will tell you why you cannot make the ſame reſolution I have done, which you ſeem unable to account for; in the firſt place you are too much in love; and in the ſecond, the ſingle ſtate is not your choice, nor indeed is it fit for you; you are much too timid to go through life alone, and therefore want ſome one on whom you can depend for protection in all the viciſſitudes of human affairs. If any thing happened to ſeparate Charles and you, it would be abſolutely neceſſary for you to make another choice. Now you need not make any proteſtations againſt it, becauſe I do not think it likely the thing will come to paſs; but if it ſhould, I would have you take a few months to conſider, before you make any declaration of that ſort.

I was interrupted by Gertrude, who walked in with a packet of letters in her hand, and pleaſure ſparkling in her eyes; they were from France, ſhe ſaid, and if I had time, would be glad I would read them before I finiſhed my letter, that I might acquaint Miſs Fitzgerald with the contents; I accordingly run them over; there is three of them, one from the count,

one

one from his ſon, and another from his daughter, all on the ſame ſubject; the ſubſtance is, the count has been informed of his ſon's inclination, and quite approves it; is only diſpleaſed he was ſo long kept ignorant of it.

He has wrote in very genteel terms to Gertrude, hoping, that as ſhe is ſtill unmarried ſhe will remain ſo a while longer if Louis has been ſo happy as to gain her eſteem, as nothing would give him greater pleaſure than a union between them; he ſays, his ſon cannot avoid going out with his regiment, and ſerving one campaign, for his honor is concerned, which he is ſure ſhe will think of ſufficient importance to to plead his excuſe, for not throwing himſelf at her feet immediately, but promiſes to obtain leave for him to return as ſoon as the campaign is over, when he flatters himſelf, his behaviour in the field will render him ſtill more worthy her favour.

The young man's letter is truly a love letter, expreſſing hopes and fears, griefs and joys, every other word, to the end of a large ſheet of paper; and concludes with a requeſt, that ſhe will now indulge

him with an anſwer; a thing ſhe has never yet done, except in her letters to his ſiſter.

Adelaide's joy I think is greater than her brother's, becauſe leſs intermixed with fears: ſhe mentions this happy change in her father, was brought about by his being at laſt convinced by the lady herſelf, that ſhe really had refuſed his ſon; and ſhe aſſured him ſhe would have done ſo, had he been a king, and of a different religion from her own: this brought the count to hear reaſon, and he conſented to ſee Louis, who immediately declared his attachment to Gertrude, and obtained his father's approbation, who ſaid, if he had known it before he propoſed the other match for him, it would have ſaved them all ſome uneaſineſs, as there could be no objection either to Miſs St. George or her family, who he knew were people of rank.

This has quite ſatisfied our pride, which I aſſure you was up in arms, and we were determined to keep up a proper dignity, in caſe the old gentleman did not conſent with a good grace: you may gueſs I encouraged her in that, as an affront of that nature was not to be put up with. So this love

love affair is likely to come to the ſame end which moſt love affairs do; I mean matrimony, that is if a cannon ball does not occaſion a more melancholy cataſtrophe, which I hope will not be the caſe, for Gertrude is a deſerving girl, and I ſhould be be ſorry to ſee her afflicted. I ſhall have an unſpeakable loſs when this young Frenchman takes her from me.

I have forborn to mention political tranſactions this ſome time, as I know you have the moſt material occurrences from Mr. Fitzgerald, and the public prints; by them you are informed our commons have demanded A FREE TRADE; I do not however give them the credit of it, except thoſe few who have uniformly been actuated by love of their country; as for the reſt they were impelled to it, by the ſpirit that at preſent pervades all degrees of people, and which they dare not ſet themſelves againſt: the ſame reaſon will oblige England to comply, becauſe ſhe is not in a ſituation to refuſe; but I am clear of opinion, that if we do not watch her with unremitting attention, ſhe will, by ſome artifice, the firſt convenient opportunity, contrive to render every thing ſhe grants

of no effect, for they are ſelfiſh, illiberal people, and look with a jealous eye on every advantage enjoyed by their fellow ſubjects, either envying their proſperity, or looking on it as ſo much taken from them; like ſome individuals, who are as anxious to detract from other people's merit, as if they thought it would add any thing to their own. To repine at another's proſperity is a moſt odious diſpoſition, even in private perſons; but it is ſtill worſe, when it is the temper of a whole nation, becauſe it then affects millions of people, who are connected with, or dependant on them; and who in conſequence, are ſure to be oppreſſed.

The uniform conduct of the Engliſh towards this kingdom, as well as to America, juſtifies my opinion of them; and I dare ſay, a little time will ſhew what dependance we can have on their affection, that is, provided we give them an opportunity; for no doubt they will diſſemble till they are ſure of carrying their point.

How ſome of the wiſe heads would laugh at a girl pretending to give an opinion in politics; it is not, I believe, a very uſual

ſu bject

ſubject for young ladies to correſpond on; but I know you have been taught to think, the welfare of our country is of as much conſequence to women as men; and when public affairs are the general topic, to write on them is an agreeable variety, and at leaſt as improving as intrigue or ſcandal, which the men generouſly allow us to talk of as much as we pleaſe, and indeed make no bad figure in ſuch converſation themſelves.

We go on here juſt as uſual: couſin James as attentive as ever to our fair widow; and Harry Maunſell a conſtant attendant on your humble ſervant. If Gertrude had her young count here, three ſuch ſwains would make us the envy of every female circle we frequented.

I obſerve when we meet Mr. Fitzgerald at a drum, which often happens, all eyes are caſt on him and Emily, for the town has already made a match between them, and his behaviour confirms the idea, as it is really very particular.

Theſe men, Eliza, with all their ſenſe, have mighty little diſcretion in thoſe ſort of matters: we women have it all to no-

thing; now Emily behaves with the greateſt compoſure and indifference, while your couſin is unable to conceal his chagrin if he cannot play at the ſame table ſhe does, and yet I am ſure ſhe likes him.——What an an unmerciful letter here is! I am half dead with writing.

Adieu,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Dec. 26.—

MY dear Louiſa's very agreeable epiſtle of the 18th had all the effect you could wiſh in reſtoring my ſpirits; for you point out the folly, and I may ſay, impiety of ſinking under every trivial diſtreſs in ſuch forcible language, that I grew aſhamed of my own weakneſs while I read, and have ever ſince manifeſted ſuch reſignation and compoſure, though my mother is confined with the rheumatiſm, and Charles did not arrive till the 22nd, that I am ſure you would be aſtoniſhed at my improvement in your Philoſophic Doctrines, joking a-part. I wiſh you were always near, to teach me to ſupport diſagreeable accidents with ſome degree of reſolution: I fear I ſhall very ſoon ſtand in need of all your arguments on that head, as the time for Charles going to England advances faſt,

and

and there is little probability that my mother will be able to go to town before then, as ſhe intended. But I will not anticipate uneaſineſs, if I can help it.

Yeſterday, according to ancient cuſtom, Charles's tenants were entertained in the Great Hall, with roaſt beef and plumb-pudding; mine were treated in the ſame manner the day before, the Steward and Houſe-keeper doing the honours of the table. My mother was not able to come amongſt them, which was a great mortification to her; but I went, diſpenſed my uſual preſent of a guinea to each of the young girls who was cloathed in her own houſewifery; and that, you may be ſure, was every one that was preſent; but if on enquiry I found any of them ſo induſtrious as to help to cloath the younger children of the family, I added a ſecond guinea, by way of encouragement to her, and to inſpire the reſt with emulation: a cap and ribbon to each of the little ones, makes them attend both to their book and their needle; and my approbation makes them all compleatly happy; for I often call in at each of their houſes, when I take an airing, and then the mothers inform me how they go on at ſchool, and

I praiſe

I praiſe or chide them, according to the account I hear.

I pay for the ſchooling of thoſe whoſe parents cannot well afford it, becauſe I think reading and writing may be uſeful to them, if they ſhould happen to be hereafter in any ſort of buſineſs: beſides, they can be better inſtructed in religion, if they are able to read the Bible.

Charles accompanied me into the Hall, and chatted with the old folks, while I was diſtributing my favours amongſt the young ones. A large bowl of punch was brought in for them to drink my health, and one of the old men made me look very ſilly, by adding a wiſh, that their next meeting might be to rejoice on my ladyſhip's marriage with his honour: you may think I could not anſwer ſuch a ſpeech, but Charles relieved me by thanking him for his wiſh, and hoping he ſhould ſee them very ſhortly on that happy occaſion. The girls ſimpered, and their mothers ſmiled: I recovered from my confuſion enough to ſay ſomething kind to them all, and then left them to enjoy their mirth the reſt of the evening; and diverted my mother

ther with what had paſſed, who was rather inclined to be low-ſpirited at being unable to go down to them, for ſhe uſed to take great delight in ſeeing them all ſo happy; and has made it a requeſt, that I will never drop the cuſtom, which I could eaſily promiſe, as it is quite agreeable to my inclination.

Charles's behaviour, ſince he returned from Hamilton-Hall, is juſt what it uſed to be, before he diſcovered any ſymptoms of that unhappy failing, which has this while paſt interrupted our peace; but I dare not flatter myſelf his preſent diſpoſition will hold, as his letter to Mr. Maunſell ſhews, how doubtful he is about it.

I rejoice to hear Gertrude's little Novel is likely to conclude to her ſatisfaction; though to be ſure, his abſence will give her much uneaſineſs; but ſomething may happen to occaſion his return ſooner than ſhe expects; there may be a peace, or ceſſation, not that there is now any appearance of it; but ſhe muſt hope the beſt. She will, indeed, be a great loſs to you; you ſhould think of ſome one to ſupply her place; for it will not be pleaſing for you

you to be alone, nor you need not, as you have ſeveral young relations, who, I dare ſay, would like well to be with you.

Your bit of Poetry was happily choſen to illuſtrate your own ſentiments; I am convinced you are perfectly right, not to let your ſenſibility run away with your happineſs, and ſincerely wiſh, I could follow your example, but fear I have not ſtrength of mind ſufficient for the purpoſe.

I am of your opinion, both as to our own Parliament and the Engliſh nation, and I find couſin James thinks as you do; for in one of his letters, he ſays, "There is no doubt but our demands will be granted, as it would be too dangerous to refuſe them; but I am ſure England will ſeize the firſt opportunity to render her conceſſions abortive." I hope we may all find ourſelves miſtaken; yet I am afraid we ſhall prove too good politicians in that reſpect.

I know moſt men diſapprove of women pretending to any opinion on theſe ſubjects; but the men of your family and mine were above that vulgar prejudice, and

and took pains to make us capable of judging with ſome degree of preciſion; and I think we are obliged to them for it, ſince it enables us to converſe ſometimes on matters of importance, and not be always confined to trifles; a little of each is agreeable.

I wonder the men are not more diſcreet in their behaviour before ſtrangers, for I ſhould think it not pleaſing to themſelves to have their attachments public, before they know how they will be received: moſt men look on it as very mortifying to be refuſed, and would think themſelves very ill treated if the lady ſhould publiſh it; though they ſcarce ever fail of making it known to every body, they make very little uſe of their underſtanding on thoſe occaſions. James is a ſtriking proof of it, for by what you ſay, a giddy lad could not be more fooliſh; and yet in every other circumſtance of life, he is quite a pattern of propriety of manners; and it certainly is far from that to draw people's eyes on Emily, and ſet them telling of her ſecond marriage, before ſhe is out of her weeds: why do not you ſpeak to him about it? but indeed, as it is a fault, or a folly

folly (call it which you pleaſe) moſt of them are guilty of, I ſuppoſe they cannot help it.

Charles has juſt got a letter from England, which, he ſays, will haſten his departure; he talks of going in two or three days, and all your leſſons are inſufficient to make me hear it with any compoſure; all I could do was, to reſtrain my tears till he had quitted the room. I can only add, that I am your's,

with much affection,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER XX.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Dec. 27.—

WRITE to me, my dear Louiſa, and comfort me if you can; for when you receive this, I ſhall be a wretched creature, as you will eaſily believe, when I tell you it will be delivered by Mr. Skeffington, on his way to England.

I wiſh you could inſpire me with a little of your fortitude, to enable me to part him with any degree of compoſure, for I fear to expoſe my weakneſs to my mother, who is very ill, and is, you know, greatly affected by every thing that afflicts me; ſo kind is this tender parent. However, as he does not ſet out till to-morrow, I will endeavour to conquer my folly before then, or at leaſt to conceal it.

I once thought of perſuading him to go through Scotland, to avoid the danger

ger of the ſea between Dublin and the Head, but on recollection I did not mention it, for it occurred to me, he would hazard his life as much in a long journey, this inclement ſeaſon, in a very ſevere climate. Yet if the air does but move a blade of graſs, my heart dies within me, at the idea of the ſhip's being daſhed againſt the rocks; or what would be ſtill worſe, it's foundering at ſea, for then he would have no chance of eſcaping. In ſhort, I have a thouſand fears, and from the terror I feel at parting, am half perſuaded, we ſhall never meet again.

I wiſh he would not go, but I am aſhamed to hint my wiſhes, as I know he has material buſineſs: it is very unfortunate for me, that I have been from my infancy uſed to his company, as it makes me unable to bear a ſeparation with any degree of fortitude, though I know the neceſſity of it, and fear that neceſſity will often recur; but what one has been long accuſtomed to, grows habitual, and is not eaſily conquered.

My father's death, which I can but juſt remember, occaſioned my mother' break-

ing up houſe, and going to live with her brother, whoſe wife being dead, they thought it would be more pleaſing to both, as each had but one child, and they too young to be their companions; and the ſociety of thoſe to whom we are attached, by any tender ties, whether of blood or affection, is very deſirable.

My mother and uncle found it ſo agreeable, that they continued together till death (as you know) deprived us of him about two years ſince.

The education of Charles and me took up the greateſt part of their attention; and as they were both too fond of us, to bear us for any length of time out of their ſight, they determined to employ proper teachers for us in the houſe, and have us inſtructed under their own eye; by which means we were continually together, and indeed, never wiſhed to part, which, I believe, was the very thing our parents had in view. However, though I think a home education, where proper inſtructors can be afforded, is by far the moſt preferable for a woman; it has great inconveniencies with regard to men, as it ſends them into the world totally unacquainted

quainted with all its ways, and of courſe liable to be impoſed on, by the firſt that ſhall find it worth their while to make a dupe of them, which is another of my fears, on Charles's account; for I know good ſenſe, without a knowlege of mankind, is not ſufficient to guard an unſuſpecting mind, againſt the wiles that are practiſed by both ſexes, to ſeduce the young and inexperienced into their nets.

But why do I teize you with my fooliſh fears? yet write to me, if it be but to chide my weakneſs; for I have no one here, either to conſole or adviſe me, and you know what a timid creature I am, and how very eaſily my ſpirits are depreſſed.

Adieu, my dear Louiſa, believe me,

Ever your's,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER XXI.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Dec. 31. —

"Oh! what pain it is to part."——

WHAT a tragedy has my dear Eliza wrote on the departure of Mr. Skeffington: no Heroine of Romance ever lamented the abſence of her Swain in more pathetic terms. How could the barbarous man think any buſineſs of ſufficient moment to be preferred to LOVE and you? I hope, however, he has the excuſe of not knowing how deeply you were affected at his going, which I am apt to think was the caſe, as I never ſaw him more lively than he was the few hours he paſſed with me, in his way through Dublin.

I beſeech you, keep him in ignorance, if you wiſh to maintain any degree of conſequence in his opinion; for men are as ſubject to vanity as women, and quite as ready

ready to make a bad uſe of their power over the heart they are ſure of.

Now for my part, ſuch a thought would never have occurred to me, as not ſeeing him again, any more than the perils and dangers of a voyage from this to Holy-Head, which you have painted in ſuch diſmal colours, as would make one's heart ach, in anticipating the diſtreſſes of a ſhipwreck; if we did not luckily recollect, that the thing ſcarce ever happens. I thank heaven, my nerves are not of ſuch a delicate texture; or my heart is not ſo tender as your's, elſe I ſhould be wretched ſomething more than three-fourths of the year; for about ſo long am I without ſeeing Harry: yet I bear it with great philoſophy, and even think the pleaſure of meeting, which we could not know without parting, far out-balances any uneaſineſs that may give; it is quite an Epicuriſm in Love, of which you can have no idea, becauſe you have not yet experienced it. Indeed I do not ſee how it is poſſible to keep an attachment alive for any length of time, without frequent ſeparations; it would be quite as dull as being married to the man, to have him like a fixture in your houſe, never to be moved:

but

but when he has been a while away, he has a thouſand things to tell you; ten thouſand ſoft profeſſions of conſtancy to make; and in ſhort, one feels ſuch agreeable ſenſations, that when you come to enjoy that refined pleaſure, you will agree with me, that being perpetually together, is the moſt inſipid thing in the world.

I hope this reflection will make you ſubmit with a better grace to the neceſſity of ſometimes parting from this idol of your heart, as you probably muſt do it often, ſince his eſtate in England will, no doubt, require his preſence at leaſt once a year, to ſee that juſtice is done, both to his tenants and himſelf: now he is nearly at age, you muſt expect he will attend to his own buſineſs. I ſhould hope your good ſenſe would prevent your wiſhing him to act otherwiſe; as the largeſt fortune cannot hold out againſt the neglect of its owner, but will, by degrees, waſte away; and moſt probably fall into the hands of thoſe to whoſe care it was committed: ſo that your own intereſt, which will ſhortly be connected with his, ſhould keep you from encouraging him to indolence, a fault which men of rank are too apt to fall into, with regard to their own affairs.

I ſhall

I ſhall conclude like all other preachers, by deſiring you to conſider what has been ſaid, and I hope your next letter will convince me it has had a proper effect: give your reaſon fair play, and I am ſure it muſt. Farewel, my ſweet friend, ſays,

Your

LOUISA MORTIMER.

It being late, I was in ſuch haſte to conclude, that I forgot to take notice of one of your fears, though I think it the leaſt groundleſs of any you mention; that is, the danger your couſin may fall into from his ignorance of the world. I confeſs, I think it more than probable his purſe will ſmart for it, if he makes any ſtay in London, where all kinds of ſharping is brought to a degree of perfection, (if I may uſe the expreſſion) that is yet unparallelled, and where a dangerous gloſs is put on every vice. However, as he has good ſenſe, and good principles, I hope he will come off with the loſs only of a little money, and he will know more of mankind by the time he goes there again.

I am

I am much concerned for your good mother's indiſpoſition, and wiſh ſhe was able to come to town, which would be a more eligible place for you both than where you are. It is a lucky thing that women have the privilege of writing long poſt-ſcripts, elſe the moſt material part of the letter would be often left out.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Jan. 2. —

I HOPE my dear Eliza has, by this time, ſuffered her reaſon to get the better of her fooliſh fears, and that ſhe is enough compoſed to be aſhamed of them. Fooliſh I muſt call them, becauſe they were groundleſs, and conjured up by your own imagination, merely for an excuſe to make yourſelf wretched. I could not help ſmiling at your giving me ſuch a long account of the manner you were brought up together, as if I had been quite ignorant of it; but as you were making it an excuſe for your being ſo unreaſonably affected at parting, I ſuppoſe you choſe to refreſh my memory on every particular circumſtance, that it might the better plead your apology, which was natural enough in you; when you muſt be ſenſible, you ſtood in need

need of every excuſe that could be made. However, I take it for granted, you have e'er now, recovered your ſenſes, which were certainly ſuſpended for a while, and are capable of reflecting on the bad conſequence of letting any paſſion get ſo powerful a dominion over you, as quite to overwhelm your underſtanding.

A man of ſenſe, though it may flatter his vanity to be ſo extravagantly beloved, would not be much delighted to have his wife ſo miſerable when he was out of her ſight, as it would be a continual drawback on his enjoyments, if he had any regard for her; and a man that had either ſenſe or affection, would have it always in his power to make you unhappy.

Harry could not conceal his aſtoniſhment, when I read your letter to him.

Sure, ſays he, "Mr. Skeffington does "not know how tenderly he is beloved, "or he could not harbour ſuch jealouſies." But, added he, "perhaps he may fear, ſhe is too ſuſceptible, for that is ſometimes the caſe.——

I leave

I leave you to conſider whether it be prudent to give room to ſuch an idea.

You will, I doubt not, hear from Charles in a few days, for he has as fair a wind as can blow; and to be ſure he will write as ſoon as he lands at the Head. He begged I would adviſe you to get your mother to town, whenever ſhe was able to bear the journey; for he cannot be eaſy till he hears you have left the caſtle, as he knows how lonely you muſt be, ſince you loſt the Boyle's, and every one elſe will be coming to Dublin, when the Holy-Days are over.

I promiſed to mention it to you, but told him, I was ſure your own inclination would bring you the inſtant your mother could venture to move.

Harry and he walked out together, and had, I find, a deal of converſation on the old ſubject. He ſeemed convinced that reaſon did not warrant his ſuſpicions; but ſaid, Love or Jealouſy had little to do with reaſon; and when he conſidered Mr. Hamilton's accompliſhments, and knew that

he liked Eliza, he could not help fearing ſhe might think too favourably of him; but ſaid he, if I find no alteration in her ſentiments when I return, I think I ſhall be quite eaſy; ſo there it reſts; and as it depends on that circumſtance, I fancy you have nothing to dread.

Adieu, dear Eliza; let me hear how your mother is, and if there is any hopes of our meeting ſoon. I expect to find by your next you are again a rational creature.

Your's, ſincerely,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Jan. 3. —

MY dear Louiſa's very agreeable letter, ſhewed me to myſelf in ſuch a ridiculous light, that I could not forbear laughing as I read it. I queſtion, however, if it would have all the effect you wiſhed, had not the ſame poſt brought a letter from Charles, informing me of his ſafe arrival at the Head, which, as it made my mind eaſy, rendered me more capable of attending to your arguments; and they are, I confeſs, unanſwerable; but though my reaſon is convinced, I cannot conquer my folly, and fear I ſhall have frequent returns of what you call the Horrors, during Mr. Skeffington's abſence; all I can

promiſe is, I will endeavour to get the better of it, and may, perhaps, ſucceed in time, with a little of your aſſiſtance; if left to myſelf, I am ſure I never ſhall.

You tell me, with what philoſophy you bear Mr. Maunſell's abſence, greateſt part of the year; you might too, have reminded me, of the patience with which you reſigned him at your father's deſire; when your affection for him was at the higheſt, and I could only have anſwered, that to follow your example, required more fortitude than I am miſtreſs of: but when I go to town, you ſhall read lectures to me on the ſubject, and I will be all attention, till I become what you wiſh me. I am ſure it would be much for my own eaſe to be ſo, as it would relieve me from a multitude of diſquiets, which I ſuffer from being incapable of correcting my too great ſenſibility; yet that it may be done, you are a convincing proof, and it will be a ſhame for me if I do not improve under the inſtruction of one whoſe precepts are enforced by practice.

You

You deſcribe the pleaſure of meeting a beloved object after a long abſence, ſo feelingly, that it is eaſy to know you ſpeak from experience; I wiſh I may find it ſo agreeable, but Mr. Skeffington's preſent diſpoſition, makes it impoſſible to gueſs what our next meeting may produce: perhaps an eternal ſeparation may enſue. If that ſhould ever be the caſe, you tell me, it will be neceſſary for me to transfer my affection to another, as I am unfit to go through life alone. I grant I am; but can you, Louiſa, expect I ſhould ever love another, after being ſo cruelly diſappointed in him, that has poſſeſſed my heart ſince I was a child? It is not poſſible; but you forbid me to make declarations; I hope I ſhall have no occaſion.

January 4th.

I was yeſterday obliged to quit my letter to entertain a neighbouring lady, who

came to paſs a day with my mother; and as ſhe lives but ſix miles from us, ſhe ſtaid till it was too late for the poſt, ſo I deferred concluding till to-day.

I have juſt got your's of the 2nd, and am really aſhamed of my own weakneſs, and of all the trouble I have given you in trying to preach me out of it. But ſure you cannot be ſerious in ſaying you read my letter to Mr. Maunſell; I bluſh at the remark you ſay he made, and am ready to die at the thoughts of having given cauſe for it; but I will not believe you could be ſo unfriendly as to expoſe me, even to him. You who were ſo delicate in regard to Emily and couſin James, that you would not allow me to mention your obſervations to Charles, though they related only to James's growing inclination, and can you be leſs anxious where my delicacy is concerned? I once thought I had the firſt place in your friendſhip; and am more hurt than you can conceive, at the bare idea of finding myſelf miſtaken; though as yet I am willing to flatter myſelf, you only wrote in that manner to alarm me: if ſo, you cannot be too ſpeedy in

in telling me ſo, as I ſhall ſuffer much uneaſineſs till then.

I have the pleaſure to inform you, my mother is a good deal better; but as to her going to town, I know not when ſhe can attempt to travel. I ſhall be impatient for your next.

Your's,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Jan. 5.—

NO, indeed, I did not expoſe my dear Eliza's weakneſs, my regard for her is too ſincere; and if it was not, my partiality to my own Sex, would prevent my letting any of the fellows (not excepting Harry Maunſell) know that an attachment to one of them, could make a good, ſenſible girl, behave like a fool, on the trifling occaſion of parting with him for a month or two. I only took that method to convince you, you were wrong, by the diſtreſs I knew you would feel on the ſuppoſition of its being known to any one but me. Do not, however, think, that what I ſaid was merely my own words; for I aſſure you, I have heard Harry, as well as other men, make the obſervation, that

that people who are very ſuſceptible, were uſually very fickle alſo; being ſubject to tender impreſſions, for every pleaſing object they meet with. Though I know you are an exception to this rule, yet if Mr. Skeffington happens to be of thoſe ſentiments, his jealouſy is eaſily accounted for; not having an high opinion of himſelf, it is natural enough for him to fear a more accompliſhed perſon may ſupplant him.

If you think this likely to be the caſe, no doubt it will be a ſtronger motive with you to correct the too great tenderneſs of your heart, than any I could offer, and I hope we ſhall have no occaſion to renew the ſubject.

Mr. Fitzgerald is become a violent favourite with Mr. O'Neil; they met here, (for the old gentleman frequently viſits me) and James, artfully enough, accommodated himſelf to his opinions, which are rather ſingular; and ſo pleaſed him, that he received an invitation to call in and play Back-gammon whenever he had an hour to ſpare. I believe he goes there two or three times a week, and loſes every game

he

he plays, for he has no ſkill at it, and pretends a great deſire to be inſtructed by Mr. O'Neil, who prides himſelf on being an adept in whatever was faſhionable in his younger days; and thinks the preſent age degenerated in every thing, even their amuſements; a common notion amongſt old people, who miſtake their own incapacity to enjoy amuſement, for ſome defect in the entertainment itſelf.

It was, however, no bad policy in your couſin to ingratiate himſelf there; for if he can gain her father's approbation, it will go a great way in recommending him to Emily, who is a perfect pattern of obedience; but I fancy it will take time to bring that matter about.

Gertrude anſwered all the letters from the family of Rouſillon, in REALLY a very pretty manner; I am ſure I could not have wrote half ſo well on the ſubject, but you young ladies, who are ſo converſant in Love matters, are never at a loſs on your favourite theme.

I doubt not if Louis will get her letter, as ſhe had one from him yeſterday, dated on

on board the fleet, which was only waiting for ſailing orders; ſo ſhe has had a moſt rueful countenance ever ſince, and we are all employed in diverting, or rather laughing her out of her diſmals: to do her juſtice, though ſhe bears it very well, for ſhe does not torment herſelf with far-fetched terrors, but as he is going into very imminent dangers, one cannot be ſurpriſed that ſhe is affected by it.

I rejoice that Mrs. Fitzgerald is on the recovery, and hope ſoon to ſee her and her fair daughter in Dublin.

Emily and Gertrude preſent their beſt affections.

Ever your's,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Jan. 8 —

ONLY think, Eliza, how unexpectedly things come about, and learn to depend on the wiſe Diſpoſer of events. What Gertrude could not have hoped for in leſs than a year, is now come to paſs in a moment, as one may call it, and that by the very means which ſhe thought ſuch a formidable bar to her wiſhes; I mean the young Count being ordered abroad. But to be a little methodical, (a thing I am not much addicted to) as I ſat reading this morning in my dreſſing room, where we uſually breakfaſt, waiting for the two ladies who had not yet appeared, Jenny announced the arrival of a ſtrange gentleman, who, ſhe ſaid, ſeemed to be a foreigner, and enquired for me; ſhe had ſhewn him into the parlour, and I choſe to go to him rather than aſk him up, it was ſuch an early hour; his back was to me as I went in, but when he turned his ſtrong reſemblance to the pic-

ture I ſaw with Gertrude, at once informed me who he was, before he had time to ſpeak; and I aſked him had I not the pleaſure of addreſſing the Count de Rouſillon? he anſwered he was the perſon, but could not gueſs by what means I came to know him, which I ſoon explained; and he proceeded to inform me that the fleet had been but three days from France, when a violent ſtorm aroſe which ſeparated them, and the veſſel he was in having ſuffered greatly during the gale, was endeavouring to make the port they had ſo lately quitted, when they were attacked by an Engliſh frigate, to which they were obliged to ſtrike, not being in a condition to fight, and were brought into Cork; from whence he had come on parole, to pay his devoirs to my lovely kinſwoman, but not wiſhing to ſurpriſe her, had taken the liberty of firſt introducing himſelf to me. He concluded with ſaying, though he was diſappointed of the glory he promiſed himſelf in the campaign, his love would not ſuffer him to call the accident a misfortune, ſince it would be the means of procuring him the happineſs he had long ſighed for.

As I knew the happineſs he meant was Gertrude's preſence, I was not ſo unfeeling to

to deprive him of that pleaſure long, and thinking it neceſſary to prepare her a little, as his delicate caution had hinted, I went up and met her juſt quitting her chamber; we came to my dreſſing-room together, and by degrees I let her know who was in the houſe: her agitation was ſo great I thought ſhe would have fainted, and calling for help, in ran her maid in as bad a ſtate as her miſtreſs, having got a glimpſe of the Count, and ſuppoſing it was his ghoſt; the fooliſh girl ran about the room like one frantic, crying out, O! madam, the Count! the Count! Her exclamations helped to rouſe Gertrude, and brought Emily into the room, who ſtood ſtaring at us all, totally unable to account for ſuch a ſcene of confuſion, till the Count himſelf hearing the hurry, no longer able to check his impatience, and following the ſound of our voices, flew into the room, and claſping Gertrude in his arms, ſaid a thouſand tender things which explained the myſtery to Emily, and relieved Sally from her terrors, who had on his firſt appearance covered her face with her apron, to avoid ſeeing what ſhe firmly believed to be a ſpirit.

When the firſt tranſports of ſuch an unexpected interview had ſubſided, the Count

gracefully apologized for the freedom he he had taken; and Gertrude who was bluſhing to death at having ſo quietly permitted it, would, I believe, have remained ſilent till now, if I had not relieved her by ſaying I would venture to engage for his pardon, as I ſaw in her eyes ſhe was not mortally offended; therefore I hoped he would be able to partake of our breakfaſt, and I ſeated myſelf at the table; they all followed my example, and Sally being reſtored to her ſenſes, paid her tribute of joy on the happy occaſion, (for ſhe knew the whole affair) and withdrew, leaving us to enjoy a little rational converſation, and compoſe ourſelves after the hurry of ſpirits ſome of us had undergone.

I can eaſily excuſe Gertrude for any little imprudence ſhe committed in attaching herſelf to this young man, without knowing how either of their friends would reliſh it, for he is ſo perfectly amiable in his perſon, and his ſentiments ſo uncommonly refined, as I could obſerve from the little converſation I have had with him, that it would require a large ſhare of ſtoiciſm to liſten to his ſoft tale with indifference, provided one was free from any other prepoſſeſſion.

He

He is of the fineſt ſtile of manly beauty, both as to face and perſon; much ſuperior to his picture, which is very handſome too; but he was quite a ſtripling when that was drawn; and Gertrude ſays, he is amazingly improved in his form.

He has all the agreeable vivacity of his country, tempered by an excellent underſtanding; in ſhort, I am a little in love with him myſelf, and quite entertained with his chat, for he ſpeaks broken Engliſh divinely, and gives it ſuch a ſoftneſs as makes it wonderfully pleaſing; it is what the language much wants; its native accent is ſo very tart, it always gives me an idea of ſcolding, ſo that in my mind a ſoft Munſter brogue is an improvement to it, provided it be not a vulgar one.

As he did not like continuing at a Hotel, I ſent Jenny to take a lodging for him near this, and ſhe got a handſome apartment in the next ſtreet, with which he is greatly pleaſed; Harry Maunſell to whoſe care I have recommended him, attended him home juſt now, for he was eaſily prevailed on to ſtay all day with his adorable.

Harry will introduce him to all the men of genteel rank, and takes him to all the places worth ſeeing; it was lucky enough that he happened to be in town.

I dare ſay the Count will not think of leaving this till he takes Gertrude with him; ſo if you wiſh to be at the wedding you muſt not make much delay in the country; for I expect we ſhall be put all into a hurry when he gets letters from home. As he has wrote from Cork, it is not to be doubted but he has aſked permiſſion to conclude an affair ſo intereſting to him while he is here.

Gertrude has been ſo prettily fluttered all day, that if it was not for a little of my aſſiſtance, ſhe would not have been able to ſtammer out a ſingle ſentence of common ſenſe; but when I ſaw her likely to make a very ſilly figure, I ſtopt her ſhort with ſome very ridiculous obſervation, that drew the laugh upon me, and gave her ſome time to recollect herſelf, by which means I ſaved her from a good deal of raillery, which I ſaw Harry and your couſin James was much inclined to; as

as they preſently diſcovered how matters ſtood between her and the Count: indeed her own confuſion would have betrayed the ſecret, if his particular attention to her had not done it.

Surely this letter will diſpel your melancholy ideas, and teach you to think every thing will turn out for the beſt, if our own perverſeneſs does not prevent it.

Mr. Skeffington's ſudden departure, and your conſequent low ſpirits, having given me a ſubject for my two laſt epiſtles, I forgot to tell you, I was quite pleaſed with your account of the method by which you encourage your tenants children, to induſtry as well as to the learning that is neceſſary for them; and I agree with you, in regard to the advantage of their knowing how to read, though I have heard people argue againſt it; but I never heard them ſay any thing convincing on the ſubject.

I am not ſurpriſed that your mother ſhould be mortified at not being able to go amongſt them, as was her cuſtom during ſo many years; and to a mind like hers it muſt

muſt give ſingular ſatisfaction to ſee ſo many people chearful and happy, whom ſhe knows ſhe contributes to make ſo; it is well for them, and I am ſure, a great pleaſure to her, that you are diſpoſed to follow her example.

Good night, dear Eliza, it is now paſt twelve, and I grow drowſy.

Your's affectionally,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Jan. 11. —

HOW kind is my dear Louiſa to take ſo much pains to amuſe me, as well as to reaſon me out of my melancholy; it would be ungrateful if I would not let her endeavours ſucceed, by ſeconding them with my own efforts, eſpecially when I muſt aſſent to the force of your arguments; they had ſuch an effect that I was growing quite chearful, when, (I am almoſt aſhamed to tell you) an unlucky dream, made ſuch an impreſſion on my mind, as rendered me totally unfit to write to you for two days, which was the cauſe of my not anſwering your's of the 6th ſooner. Do not however be very angry with me, ſince I acknowlege my own folly, and have got the better of it, at leaſt for the preſent: beſides you know my mother, who is in other

other reſpects a ſenſible woman, has great faith in dreams which is ſome little apology for me.

I never heard Charles ſay any thing, that gave me room to think he was of the ſame opinion which you ſay Mr. Maunſell, and many other men are; but if we ever meet again I will try to diſcover his ſentiments, and be that as it will, I will certainly try to correct what is amiſs in my own diſpoſition.

I did not think James had ſo much art, and though it is a talent I do not much approve in the preſent caſe, I cannot help wiſhing him ſucceſs; for ſince Emily does not diſlike him, it is no harm to uſe a little artifice to obtain her father's good graces.—Your's of the 8th is juſt brought me, I mean I have juſt read it, and heartily congratulate Gertrude on the agreeable accident that has put an end to all her fears. It is indeed a proof that we ſhould never deſpond, let our proſpect be ever ſo dark, ſince the ſcene may be changed in a moment when we leaſt expect it; though ſtriking the inſtance, it is probable I ſhould have paſſed it over unnoticed, if your

your judicious obſervations had not pointed it out to me, with intention, I know, that I ſhould profit by it, which I hope I ſhall.

I read part of your letter to my mother, who was highly pleaſed both with your ſerious reflexions, and your ſprightly deſcription of the confuſion the Count's arrival occaſioned in your family. Sally's terror diverted us much; I cannot but ſay it was natural enough in the girl, who thought he was on his way to America, to be frightened at his ſudden appearance, and concluded it was ſomething ſupernatural; for I dare ſay, ſhe is quite convinced that Ghoſts are continually ſtalking about the world.

Your picture of the Count is very captivating, and does great credit to Gertrude's choice; I ſhall be horridly diſappointed if he leaves Dublin before I get there, at preſent I cannot judge when that will be, my mother's health is ſo uncertain, ſometimes better, ſometimes worſe; though on the whole, ſhe is not near ſo bad as ſhe was, becauſe ſhe is not ſo bad for a conſtancy; therefore I am in hopes ſhe will recover time

time enough for me to be at the wedding, as there muſt be letters from France, and ſeveral preliminaries ſettled before it comes to that.

I am not ſurprized that Gertrude was ſo much fluttered; had I been in her place it would have half killed me, but ſhe is not ſuch a weak creature as I am, though her form is very delicate.

I like as well as you to hear foreigners ſpeak Engliſh; they give ſomething I cannot deſcribe to the language, which improves it prodigiouſly. I ſuppoſe you are partial to the Munſter brogue, becauſe Harry Maunſell is of that Province; not that I think he has more of the accent than juſt what is agreeable; no doubt you think ſo too, and therefore give it the preference.

My mother's good wiſhes with mine, wait on you, and your friends at your houſe.

Your's, as uſual,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Jan. 14. —

YOU never, I believe, had a more punctual correſpondent than I am; and ſure I deſerve credit for it now, if I never did before, ſince I withdraw myſelf from moſt agreeable converſation, to enjoy the pleaſure of writing to my dear Eliza, and, if poſſible, keep her from dwelling on unpleaſing ideas, which I am ſorry to find poſſeſſes your ſleeping as well as your waking imagination. You bid me not be very angry with you, yet how can I be otherwiſe, when you give way to ſuch a debility of mind, as to let your peace be diſturbed by a dream, at a time too when you might naturally ſuppoſe it proceeded from that lowneſs of ſpirits, which I fear you but too much encourage.

I am aware you will tell me there are examples in ſcripture, for putting faith in the fleeting forms of the night, and I grant there are ſeveral; but you muſt alſo grant, that when Heaven thought proper to give mankind notice of its intentions by dreams, it gave them ſkilful interpreters; at preſent ſuch notices would be uſeleſs, ſince we have no prophets, and muſt depend on old nurſes, who always explain them according to their own fears or fancies, not having the ſpirit of divination to direct them. You muſt give me leave to ſay, it is being rather unthankful for the bleſſings you enjoy, to torment yourſelf with imaginary ills. If you muſt weep, Eliza, ſeek out the ſons and daughters of affliction, (with which every neighbourhood abounds) and weep over their ſorrows; it will make you aſhamed to brood over imaginary evils, when you ſee ſo many ſuffering real calamities: it will beſide have this good effect, you will relieve them as far as you are able. Let me entreat you to let your underſtanding operate as it ought, and it is impoſſible you can fall into ſuch ſuperſtitious follies.

I am

I am really aſhamed of appearing ſo conceited, as I am ſure I muſt do, in taking upon me to be your inſtructor, but you force me to it, by laying aſide the uſe of your own reaſon, for it is not that I think myſelf by any means qualified for the office, of which I am the more convinced, ſince all I have ſaid has ſo little effect upon you, whoſe partiality would allow my arguments perhaps more weight than they deſerved; yet it ſeems they do not carry conviction; ſo all I can do is to wiſh for Mr. Skeffington's ſpeedy return, who I hope will at leaſt convince you of the truth of my aſſertion, that the pleaſures of meeting thoſe we love, far out-ballances the pain of parting, which I acknowlege I know from experience, and I have no apprehenſion that your meeting will be productive of any thing but ſatisfaction to you both, though you are ſo induſtrious in ſeeking occaſion to fear the contrary.

I hope both for your mother's ſake, and yours, that ſhe will be able to come to town before our affairs here are brought

to a concluſion; and you have a good chance, as all the neceſſaries cannot be done without time.

Young Rouſſillon is a pleaſing addition to our ſociety: and I aſſure you Gertrude is much improved in chearfulneſs ſince his arrival. He puts our leſs lively ſwains quite out of their way, for he gallants us all, and I ſometimes make Harry Maunſell look grave, by giving my hand to the Count, and leaving him to attend Gertrude, who I tell him is much fitter for him, becauſe ſhe is ſo ſedate; he takes the firſt convenient opportunity of expoſtulating on what he calls my cruelty, in denying him the only pleaſure he has to hope for, that of enjoying as much of my company as circumſtances will admit.

I do but laugh at his rueful face, and tell him, ſituated as we are, it is abſolutely ridiculous to ſee him always at my elbow; beſides it is not in nature to reſiſt the temptation of flirting with a French man, they do it ſo agreeably. He ſighs, and looks ſad, and is ſo very ſorry he has not talents to make himſelf as pleaſing as the Count, that if I did

I did not revive his ſpirits by a ſweet ſmile, which he interprets to his own liking, I ſhould be a little afraid he would be found hanging in his garters: it is mighty ſilly however in him, to indulge himſelf in ſuch a hopeleſs paſſion; theſe ſort of early entanglements ſometimes prevent the happineſs of our future lives, we ſhould be therefore very cautious of a firſt attachment; but the miſchief is, we are enſnared before we think of the conſequence.

Perhaps I may be a little partial to the Munſter accent; nothing extraordinary that, ſince it has been made pleaſing to my ear, by my firſt hearing the ſoft language of love in that tone, to which I think it is exceedingly well adapted; no doubt the northern accent is muſic to you.

I expect to hear in your next Charles is ſafe arrived in London, for you may have had a letter from him by this time.——This unmerciful Frenchman thinks we ſhould never be weary of public amuſements, and is continually hurrying us from one to another, till I am

half dead with fatigue, for you know I am not fond of a life of diſſipation, but as it is not to laſt long, I ſubmit, and he is now calling me to the play. I muſt therefore ſubſcribe myſelf

My dear Eliza's,

Affectionate,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Jan. 17.—

I ACKNOWLEGE my dear Louiſa is not only the moſt punctual, but the moſt agreeable correſpondent I could poſſibly have, and I might add, the moſt inſtructive, without being accuſed of flattery; for any one who ſaw your letters muſt allow, more perſuaſive arguments cannot be advanced, than what you ſet forth to engage me to conquer the little weakneſſes of my diſpoſition. I am thankful for your kind intentions, and determined to follow your advice and example, and become a rational creature as faſt as I can, or I find I am likely to be very unhappy, ſince one ſhould in this life meet perpetual cauſe for uneaſineſs, if, as I have done, they always

always look at the worſt ſide of every event, and give themſelves up to fruitleſs repinings: I will therefore try to fortify my mind againſt diſagreeable circumſtances, as I think it very probable I ſhall have ſome ſuch to encounter, from that unfortunate defect in Charles's temper, which he ſeems himſelf to have ſuch doubts of conquering.

I have had a letter from him ſince I wrote to you; he was in London, but meant to leave it next day and ſet out for Suſſex, to ſettle the buſineſs he went on. He took over young Mc'Neil, and will ſettle him there as his agent, ſince he is of tried integrity; and the perſon that hitherto managed his Engliſh eſtate, has certainly not been honeſt.

When Charles has concluded his buſineſs he will return to London, and ſee every thing that is worth ſeeing there, before his return: but a month, he ſays, will be more than ſufficient for that; and he hopes to find me in Dublin, as he will not go to the caſtle till ſummer, unleſs my mother's illneſs ſhould detain me there longer than we expected. He

ſays

ſays the Engliſh women are handſome, and in general, fairer than the Iriſh; yet he gives the preferuce to his country-women, for the modeſt ſweetneſs of their looks.

I cannot but join with Mr. Maunſell, in thinking it rather cruel of you to give another the pleaſure of attending you, when you know it would make him happy, eſpecially ſince (as he obſerves) it is the only happineſs he is likely to enjoy with you; and beſides, he ſeldom has opportunity for that, being the greateſt part of his time ſeparated from you; that I think he deſerves ſome little conſideration: but I believe, my dear Louiſa has now and then a ſmall propenſity towards flirting.

But pray how does Gertrude approve of your engaging the Count? I ſhould ſuppoſe ſhe would not be much obliged to you for the exchange, as it is likely Mr. Maunſell is not at ſuch times a very chearful companion, though he is uſually extremely pleaſing. I allow his conſtancy to you, who have cruſhed all his hopes, is no great proof of his wiſdom, but

but I would be glad to know, who that loved was ever wiſe except yourſelf, and we cannot expect to meet with prodigies often. You adviſe me to what moſt people would think a bad remedy for low ſpirits; to viſit the afflicted: I always thought ſo myſelf, and therefore avoided it, though my purſe was always open to thoſe who applied to me: however I have ſuch an opinion of your judgement, that I am reſolved to try what effect it will have. On conſideration, I believe you are quite right, for they muſt have very little humanity that would not forget their own afflictions, when they ſaw others ſuffering much greater; and very little religion, that would not be thankful to Heaven for exempting them from ſuch calamities.

The obvious conſequence is, one will be aſhamed to complain of trifling ills.—Why could not I think of that before? but you ſee by it how much I need your inſtructions, and that they do carry conviction, though they did not take effect all at once: ſo I hope you will not give up an office, you

are

are ſo capable of; for without your advice, I feel that I ſhould often act very fooliſhly.

Your arguments againſt believing in dreams, is ſo concluſive, I could not help reading it to my mother, who uſed to be a great advocate for them; ſhe ſeemed ſtruck with what you ſaid, and, after a ſhort ſilence, indeed Eliza, ſays ſhe, I never conſidered the matter in that light, and do not know that it can be confuted: but this I know, I never met with any young lady who has ſo juſt a way of thinking on every ſubject as Miſs Mortimer; I am ſure, my dear, you will not be jealous that I do not except you, which with all my partiality I cannot; but your friend is four years, at leaſt, older than you, and has made ſo good uſe of her time, that many women old enough to be her mother, might be improved by her converſation.

I will not tell you all ſhe ſaid of you, becauſe I know it diſtreſſes you to hear your own praiſes; but you may believe, it gratified me very much.

My

My mother intends going into the drawing-room to-day, for the firſt time; I wiſh ſhe may not take cold: She joins me in ſincere affection to you.

Your's, in tendereſt friendſhip,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Jan. 25.—

ARE not you ſurpriſed at my long ſilence? to be ſure you are, as it is very unſual with me to neglect writing to my dear Eliza for ſo many days; but your wonder will ceaſe when I tell you, I am abſolutely out of breath with the hurry this wicked Count has put us all into. You have not the leaſt chance of being at the wedding, for the preparations are going on with unreaſonable ſpeed, and the ſettlements are actually very near finiſhed, he has ſo effectually quickened the clerks.

He got letters from France ſoon after I wrote to you laſt, I believe the day or two after; he ſays himſelf, it was as ſoon as an anſwer could poſſibly arrive; and immediately he communicated them to Gertrude and me, requeſting if we diſapproved of any part, I might ſay ſo,

and it ſhould be altered. There was, however, no objection to be made, every thing was done ſo genteely by his father. When I ſignified my approbation, (for you muſt know I am her guardian on this occaſion) he told me, he ſhould immediately give proper orders to an Attorney, and hoped I would uſe my influence with Miſs St. George, to prevail on her not to make unneceſſary delays, but fix an early day for his happineſs.

I undertook the embaſſy, and gave it as my opinion, that ſhe ſhould not take an unreaſonable time, as he is appointed to a place at Court, and will return home as ſoon as he conveniently can; for I believe he will be permitted to go on parole. She mentioned four or five weeks, and then ſaid ſix or ſeven, upon which I left her, leſt ſhe ſhould increaſe it to ſo many months; and telling him what ſhe had ſaid, he began to exclaim moſt vehemently in French, againſt her determination; and begged me to remember what a tedious time that would be to him, who had already ſuffered ſuch a long probation, by loſing her juſt

at

at the time he had hoped to be united to her for ever.

I then told him, if he would leave it to me, I would endeavour to get her conſent for the 10th of next month, which will be her birth-day, and ſooner than that, he could not expect. He ſaid he would abide by my deciſion, and after much perſuaſion, ſhe agreed to it, but inſiſted it looked like being in too great a hurry.

This weighty point being ſettled, there is a thouſand little matters to be done, as we do not know how ſoon after the marriage they will ſet out for France. The ſight of thoſe preparations recalls to poor Harry's memory the time when he returned to Ireland, in full hope of being in that ſituation, and the idea, that all his proſpects of happineſs in that way, are now ſhut in, makes him ſigh; and at times raiſes a momentary ſadneſs in my heart; not that I cannot marry him, believe me, I have no regrets on that account, but becauſe I ſee the diſappointment continues to ſit too heavily on him. The Count, whom I find, he has let into the ſecret, ſaid to

me to-day, " Ah ! Miſs Mortimer, my " happineſs reminds poor Mr. Maunſell of " his diſappointment ; can you give him " no hope ?" I laid my hand upon his mouth ; " that is a prohibited ſubject, " Count ; the thing is impoſſible ; Mr. " Maunſell knows it is." He ſhook his head, and with the ſofteſt expreſſion of compaſſion in his eyes, (you know how expreſſive French eyes are) ſaid, " 'tis " pity, 'tis great pity !" I am ſure he makes Harry much worſe than he would be, by pitying him, and indulging him in talking over the affair ; for he was chearful and eaſy before.

You ſay it is cruel in me to let any one elſe attend me ; you do not, however, conſider, that though there may be no impropriety in his making a public ſhew of his attachment to me, it would not be quite ſo proper for me to do ſo ; which I ſhould in effect, if I refuſed the little offices of politeneſs from any other man : and notwithſtanding you ſay, I have a propenſity to flirting, you know me too well to think I could find any pleaſure in giving pain to a heart that doats on me : but you muſt confeſs, we are in a very peculiar ſituation, and it requires

requires ſome degree of circumſpection to avoid the tongue of ſlander.

Gertrude was not a bit diſpleaſed with me for leaving Harry to be her Gentleman-Uſher; for beſides that, he is a great favourite with her, ſhe was well pleaſed not to be the object of the Count's attention in public. So you ſee the exchange ſerved two good purpoſes, it kept people from making particular obſervations, either on her or me.

I rejoice to hear your mother can leave her room, and am not a little proud of her good opinion.

Adieu, dear girl;

Your's ever,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

LETTER XXX.

Miſs FITZGERALD, to Miſs MORTIMER.

Jan. 28.—

I THINK this laſt jaunt of mine to the country has produced nothing but diſagreeable events. In the firſt place, it ſeparated me from my Louiſa; then it deprived me of meeting Emily; of ſeeing the Volunteers; gave occaſion for Charles's jealouſy to break out; and to ſum up all, the coldneſs of the place brought on my mother's illneſs, which will now detain me from Gertrude's wedding; and that, I acknowlege, is a very great mortification to me; and what is ſtill worſe, I have no one pleaſing reflection to make me amends for all my diſappointments,

appointments, except that my mother continues tolerably, and I have hopes we ſhall get to town in leſs than a month.

I never liked the Country in winter, and from this time, I believe I ſhall hate the ſight of it.

My acquaintance with the Miſs Boyle's is the only agreeable circumſtance that has occurred ſince I left Dublin: I fancy they will be in town before me, as the ſervants they left in the houſe, tell our's, they expect their maſter ſoon; and I know he was to come home when his daughters ſet out for town. When I come, I will introduce them to you.

I have been trying the experiment you recommended to me, Louiſa, and it has ſucceeded to the utmoſt of your wiſhes. I am aſhamed of having ever been ſo unthankful for the many bleſſings I enjoy; as to overlook them all, and make myſelf unhappy with the apprehenſion of evils, that, perhaps, may never come to paſs; and if they did,

would

would not be equal to half the miſeries which I have ſeen one family patiently ſuffering; but people bred up in eaſe and affluence, have no idea of what real misfortune is; and therefore lament as ſuch, trifles that ought not to give a reaſonable creature a moment's pain.

The day after I wrote to you laſt, I took Kitty with me in the chaiſe, and went about three miles off, where ſhe told me there were ſeveral poor Cottagers on the eſtate of a young gentleman now on his travels; for thank Heaven, the lower claſs of tenants on Charles's eſtate, or mine, are none of them in want. We had turned into a bye-road that led to a few ſcattered cabbins, and were driving towards the neareſt, when I ſay a pretty girl, about nine years old, run out, and clapping her hands together, in an agony of grief, cried out, "Oh! my "mammy! my mammy!" and without ſeeming to hear the carriage, in a manner flew acroſs the road to a cottage at the other ſide, into which ſhe went. The child's exclamation raiſed both my pity and curioſity, as I gueſſed it muſt

be

be occaſioned by ſome diſtreſs ſhe had left her mother in; and calling John to ſtop, I ſtepped out, followed by Kitty, and went directly into the houſe: but what a ſcene of woe preſented itſelf! at one ſide of the room lay the corpſe of a man, on a bed; at the other, near the dying embers of a turf fire, lay the woman on a bed of ſtraw, in a fainting fit; an infant about three days old, ſleeping at her ſide. With Kitty's aſſiſtance I raiſed her, and applied my Eau de Luce to her noſe, which ſoon revived her, and ſhe looked wildly round; when caſting her eyes on her dead huſband, ſhe clapped her hands over them, as if unable to bear the ſight, and cried out, who was ſo cruel as to bring me back to a life of miſery! I bid her be comforted, as I hoped ſhe and her children would yet be happy. The ſtrange voice ſtruck her ear, (for I believe ſhe never obſerved my appearance) and ſhe took down her hand to view me, juſt as the little girl came in, followed by an old woman.

They all looked aſtoniſhed, and ſeemed at a loſs to account for what they ſaw;

ſaw; when I, who was ſupporting the poor woman, and apprehenſive ſhe would faint again, aſked if they had any thing fit to give her? The old woman with tears in her eyes, anſwered, ſhe feared there was nothing but a little butter-milk, and a few potatoes, which the poor neighbours brought in. I then called for ſome water, and gave her a little, with Eau de Luce in it, which recovered her from the faintiſhneſs; and tears flowing plentifully, ſhe was much relieved, and we laid her down again.

I ſent John to an Inn about half a mile off, for a bottle of Wine, and ſome other refreſhments; and while he was away, enquired of the old woman, how the people came into ſuch diſtreſs. She told me the man had been a Linen-Weaver, near Armagh; and lived very comfortably, till he fell into a lingering illneſs; which diſabled him from working, and having nothing to ſupport him but what his wife earned by ſpinning, they were forced to ſell moſt of their furniture, to pay their rent, and brought the

the ſmall remainder to the place they were now in, where they had been but a few months; they made a ſhift to maintain themſelves by the woman's induſtry, and what little the child could do, till the man grew ſo bad, his wife could do nothing but attend him, and they were reduced to the greateſt diſtreſs, when to add to it, ſhe was brought to bed a few days ago; that ſhe ſtaid with them as much as ſhe could, and had not left them half an hour, when the child ran to tell her, her father was dead, and her mother dying; ſhe concluded with ſaying, ſhe hoped Heaven had ſent me that way for their relief.

John returned ſooner than I could have expected, and I gave the woman ſome warm Wine and Water, and gave directions for a Chicken he had brought to be made into broth for her, and the old woman undertook to ſtay and do every thing that was proper, to whom I gave ſome money to provide firing, and whatever was neceſſary for that night: promiſing to ſend a ſupply from our houſe next day.

You

You may be ſure I rewarded her for her trouble, in a manner that will ſecure her attendance while it is wanted; and as ſoon as the woman is well enough, I intend to bring her to a neat little houſe that is now unoccupied on my lands, where ſhe ſhall be rent-free, till ſhe can, by her induſtry (for I do not wiſh to encourage idleneſs) get a few guineas to lay by, and then I will let her have it at a very eaſy rent: the garden is now well cropped, ſo that ſhe will have nothing to do but attend her ſpinning for ſome time.

I am now convinced that the wiſe man's ſaying, "It is better to go to the "houſe of mourning," provided one makes a proper uſe of the leſſon it teaches; for thoſe poor people's diſtreſs has engroſſed all my thoughts; and relieving them, given me more pleaſing reflections than ever I enjoyed before on doing a charitable action: becauſe till now, I never ſaw the wretchedneſs from which I relieved the objects of my compaſſion.

While

While I ſtay in the country, I ſhall often ſtep into the little huts, and ſee what way the poor inhabitants are in, and in Dublin the news-papers frequently furniſh us with notice where to find the diſtreſſed; for the future I ſhall always viſit them myſelf; it will teach me to ſet a proper value on the bleſſings that are extended to me, and to bear light evils without repining.

I will not again pretend to blame you in regard to Mr. Maunſell, for I acknowlege you are uncommonly circumſtanced; nor do I know a woman, except yourſelf, that would act with ſuch propriety in the ſame ſituation: but I cannot help pitying him. No doubt, the Count, who has ſo much ſenſibility, is quite affected with his melancholy tale.

I hope ſoon to hear from Charles in London, for then his ſtay in England will not be very much longer; perhaps we may reach Dublin nearly at the ſame time. Do you think James has made any declaration to Emily yet? I find

all our family look on it as a match very likely to take place: I hope it may.

Tell Gertrude how mortified I am that I cannot fill the office of Bride-Maid at her nuptials, which I had promiſed myſelf I ſhould. Who is ſhe to have beſide you. Believe me, dear Louiſa,

Your affectionate,

ELIZA FITZGERALD.

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

Miſs MORTIMER, to Miſs FITZGERALD.

Feb. 1.—

I HAVE got ſuch a habit of anſwering my dear Eliza's letters immediately, that it is a diſtreſs to me to miſs a poſt; but in the preſent poſture of affairs here, I am obliged to do it; and until the hurry is a little over, I think you will not hear from me again.

What a buſtle a wedding makes in a family; even the ſervants are anxious to have their finery ready on the occaſion; and I aſſure you, our maidens will make no ſmall figure, as Gertrude inſiſted on

bedizening them all at her own expence, not excepting Emily's damſel, who by the way, is quite a Belle amongſt her own claſs, and I believe is much delighted at being permitted to throw off her mourning for that night, when I dare ſay, ſhe will appear in all her airs, for I ſee ſhe lays herſelf out for admiration.

There are to be three Bride-Maids, beſides your humble ſervant, all Gertrude's near relations; and ſhe could not aſk one without offending the reſt; ſo ſhe might as well let them all have the name of it. There is Miſs Ponſonby, and the two Miſs Forteſcue's; you know they are very young ladies, and I find they had ſet their hearts on the matter, for they all came together, to pay her a viſit, and when ſhe aſked them to be her Bride-Maids, their eyes ſparkled with joy, and it was impoſſible not to ſmile at the eagerneſs with which they accepted the invitation, and the hurry they were in to be gone, that they might buy new gowns, and a million of other things, which

which they repeated with amazing volubility, all talking at once; and I dare ſay, have talked and thought of little elſe ſince: though we do not mean to make any great parade of it, there muſt be a good many people, as it is a compliment ſhe cannot avoid paying ſome uncles, aunts, and couſins, that are now in town; I think it beſt ſo, for I always obſerve, the more company there is, the leſs notice is taken of the Bride, their attention being engaged by each other.

I wiſh the affair was over for Gertrude's ſake, who begins to look ſerious as the day draws near; I am not ſurpriſed ſhe ſhould, as it will make ſuch a material in every circumſtance of her life; it is not only the change from a ſingle ſtate, in which ſhe is intirely miſtreſs of her own actions, to one wherein ſhe muſt accommodate herſelf to the temper and diſpoſition of another, but it will alſo remove her from her country, and all her connexions, and place her amongſt people who can have no other attachment to her, than what her own merit may en-

title her to. No wonder her reflections ſhould be rather melancholy; I muſt confeſs, I think ſhe ſtands in need of all her affection for the Count, and a large ſhare of philoſophy beſides, to enable her to ſupport her ſpirits. One thing is much in her favour, that is, ſhe is ſo little alone, that ſhe has ſcarce any time for thinking. Was I in her place, it is my opinion I ſhould have declared off, when I came to conſider the conſequence.

Harry expects to hear from Charles when he has ſeen a little of London; I am not ſure that I did not tell you that before.

I was a good deal affected for your poor family, and ſhould have been quite diſtreſſed but that I knew, now you had met with them, they would be effectually relieved: I muſt beg of you to give them five guineas, to make ſome little addition to their furniture and cloaths, and ſet it down to my account, it would be too much for you to take it all upon your-

ſelf,

ſelf, when you will meet with ſo many others that want your aſſiſtance.

I knew your viſiting the afflicted would have the deſired effect, becauſe you are alive to the diſtreſſes of your fellow-creatures. You are not one of thoſe who fancy they are poſſeſſed of ſuperfine feelings, yet never feel for any one but themſelves, and are ſo apprehenſive of hurting their ſpirits, that their deareſt friends, if in ſickneſs or affliction, muſt find ſome one of leſs feeling, and more humanity, to perform the tender offices of friendſhip; for in this age of delicate nerves, the terms are by no means ſynonimous. I am ſure we know one or two ladies who are always talking of their fine feelings, and were never yet known to do a good-natured or charitable action.

I am obliged to you for your approbation, though at the expence of the reſt of the Sex; it is no reflection on them, however, for I believe a peculiarity of ſentiment is neceſſary to enable one to conduct themſelves in ſuch a particular ſituation

ſituation as mine ; and that cannot be expected from many, nor do ſuch circumſtances often occur. Indeed there is very few to whom my example ſhould be recommended ; for it would be a moſt dangerous ſtate to thoſe who have great ſenſibility, and very little command of their paſſions, to keep up an intimate friendſhip with a young man they like, and are effectually reſtrained from marrying : the tryal would be too great for female fortitude to ſupport, if not aſſiſted by ſuch a ſingularity of diſpoſition as I happen to poſſeſs. If Harry's was ſimilar, there would be no more debating on Platonic Love, as we ſhould be proof poſitive of its exiſtence. As it is, I think the point muſt remain undecided.

Yes, the Count deplores Harry's misfortune in the moſt pathetic terms, and Harry, in conſequence, is mighty ſad, and mighty ſilly : I ſhould be obliged to alter my conduct towards him, if I did not conclude that his friends departure, which is is not far off, will reſtore him to his underſtanding.

What

What a detail you have given of the diſagreeable events produced by your going to the country; they were not very pleaſing to be ſure, however, I look upon the accident which occaſioned Charles's jealouſy to break out, as rather fortunate than otherwiſe: had it been ſmothered till after you were married, the conſequence would have been much worſe, ſince you would have no remedy but parting, which will be much better done before marriage, if you ſhould find him incurable; but I hope you will not.

No, I do not believe Mr. Fitzgerald and Emily have come to any explanation; but his behaviour cannot be miſtaken, ſhe is forced to acknowlege it cannot, and is grown more reſerved to him upon it, probably that deters him from ſpeaking; he fears to give her offence by entering on ſuch a ſubject ſo early in her widowhood, as he muſt ſee ſhe ſtudiouſly avoids giving him any opportunity. I am, however, of opinion, it will come to ſomething in due time, for ſhe does not diſlike him, and can have no other objection to him,

him, unleſs her father forbid the banns, on account of his fortune not being equal to her's; but I am in hopes he will allow his birth to make up for the deficiency, as I know he ſets ſome value on ancient gentility; a new title would not have half the weight with him.

I ſhould not have thought of the objection, only Mr. O'Neil is ſo fond of money; otherwiſe I would ſuppoſe he might think his fortune and her's together, quite ſufficient for happineſs, as his is not inconſiderable, and her's very large, excluſive of what is ſettled on the child. James is exceeding fond of the little thing, and I can tell you, that is no bad way of paying his court to its grandfather, who is mighty fooliſh about the baby: it is a pretty creature too, and one cannot help taking notice of it.

My next will give you an account of the wedding; Gertrude wiſhes you could be

be with her. Tea waits, while I tell you, I am, moſt affectionately,

Your's,

LOUISA MORTIMER.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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